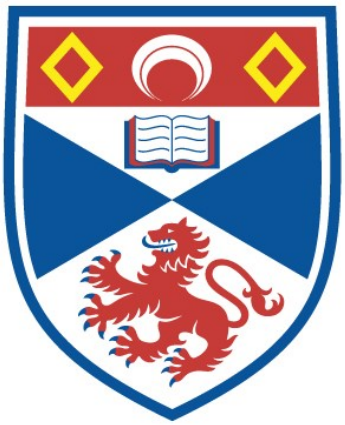
ANDROGYNY AND THE RECONCILIATION OF OPPOSITES IN THE NOVELS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF

Clare J. Charbonneau

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews



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A thesis submitted for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the following study is to demonstrate that Virginia Woolf's belief in the theory of androgyny is not merely a "flirtation", as Lyndall Gordon asserts, but, rather, that it is the focus of her artistic and personal vision. The study consists of five chapters, prefaced by an introduction to the artist's perspective and the early androgynous approaches of her first novels. Attention is given to each of Woolf's novels, some of which have been given a more extensive examination than others. Virginia Woolf's diaries, letters, essays and sketches are used where appropriate to develop this study of the novels.

The first three chapters, on Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, and Orlando, trace the movement of several protagonists toward their individual knowledge of the composite self. The study of Woolf's theory in Chapter Four combines both The Waves and The Years into a consideration of androgyny primarily as the unifying force within the world at large, rather than as a private vision toward which one struggles. The dissertation concludes with a study of Woolf's final novel, Between the Acts, which brings the androgynous approach of the earlier novels to its culminating vision.

I, Clare J.Charbonneau, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 55,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

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I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 in October 1988 and as a candidate for the degree of M Phil (Mode A) in April 1989; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between October 1988 and September 1989.

30/9/1989

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of M Phil (Mode A) in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

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My sincerest gratitude to Dorothy Black, Michael Herbert, and Paul and Jillian Charbonneau.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations refer to the sources cited throughout this study. (Publication details in the Select Bibliography):

(AROOO) - Virginia Woolf. A Room of One's Own.
(AWD) - Virginia Woolf. A Writer's Diary.
(Bazin) - Nancy Topping Bazin. Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision.
(Bell i, Bell ii) - Quentin Bell. Virginia Woolf: A Biography. Two volumes.
(BTA) - Virginia Woolf. Between the Acts.
(Brewster) - Dorothy Brewster. Virginia Woolf.
(CS) - Virginia Woolf. Congenial Spirits: The Selected Letters of Virginia Woolf. Ed. Joanne Trautmann Banks.
(Daiches) - David Daiches. Virginia Woolf.
(Dowling) - David Dowling. Bloomsbury Aesthetics.
(Freedman) - Ralph Freedman. The Lyrical Novel.
(Gordon) - Lyndall Gordon. Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life.
(G & R) - Virginia Woolf. Granite and Rainbow.
(Hafley) - James Hafley. The Glass Roof.
(HH) - Virginia Woolf. A Haunted House and Other Short Stories.
(Heilbrun) - Carolyn Helibrun. Toward a Recognition of Androgyny.
(Henke.Marcus) - New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf. Ed. Jane Marcus.
(Hussey) - Mark Hussey. The Singing of the Real World.
(JR) - Virginia Woolf. Jacob's Room.
(Lakshmir) - Vijay Lakshmir. "The Solid and the Intangible".
(Lee) - Hermione Lee. The Novels of Virginia Woolf.
(Marder) - Herbert Marder. Feminism and Art.
(Moi) - Toril Moi. Sexual/Texual Politics.
(MD) - Virginia Woolf. Mrs. Dalloway.
(N & D) - Virginia Woolf. Night and Day.
(Novak) - Jane Novak. The Razor Edge of Balance.
(O) - Virginia Woolf. Orlando.
(Poresky) - Louise Poresky. The Elusive Self.
(Reflections) - D.H. Lawrence. Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays.
(TCDB) - Virginia Woolf. The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays.
(TCR I, TCR II) - Virginia Woolf. The Common Reader. Two series.(TVO) - Virginia Woolf. The Voyage Out.
(TTL) - Virginia Woolf. To the Lighthouse.
(TW) - Virginia Woolf. The Waves.
(TY) - Virginia Woolf. The Years.
(VBK) - Alice Van Buren Kelley. The Novels of Virginia Woolf: Fact and Vision.

INTRODUCTION

"Everyone is partly their ancestors; just as everyone is partly man and partly woman."

- Virginia Woolf

Throughout the art and life of Virginia Woolf, one traces a consistent search for pattern and unity in the midst of disparity. The movement consists of an attempt to reconcile the opposing masculine and feminine energies, which Woolf believes dictate the flux of the universe. Woolf views the world in terms of a chaotic, all-embracing duality which must, in order for there to be creativity, selfhood, and life-affirmation, be reconciled into a singular, rounded whole, "the globe which we spend our lives in trying to shape" (N & D, 533). Numerous other oppositional forces branch from this broad sexual dichotomy, including such forces as the outer and the inner self, day and night, the intellect and intuition, and fact and vision, all of which break down to correspond generally to the two sexes. The attempt to mould these disparate principles into one procreative, free and visionary whole is the essence of Woolf's personal as well as literary philosophy.

As an artist, Woolf was increasingly aware of those structures within society which contribute to rendering the artist, as well as the ordinary individual, unproductive and restricted. The most dangerous, as well as the most widespread of these restrictions, is the reinforcement of the masculine/feminine divide. Woolf holds that the duality is not only perpetuated by masculine society, but is also the very source of gender segregation and sex roles, both of which work in strong opposition to the creative individual and the self.

Woolf's largest contention is that, in order to capture the "secret of perpetual life" (AROOO, 153) and wholeness within the individual, the art of fiction, and the universe, the point of equilibrium must be reached. In other words, the harmony of the globe, the state of androgyny which bridges the abyss between masculine and feminine principles, must be moulded and held in our hands, "and so [held], day after day" (AWD, 138). This mystical equilibrium gives birth to the inspiration of "life itself" (TCDB, 111). Woolf suggests that

> The interest in life does not lie in what people do, nor even in their relations to each other, but largely in the power to communicate with a third party, antagonistic, enigmatic, yet perhaps persuadable, which one may call life in general. (Cited Brewster, 81- 82)

In other words, life consists of passing beyond our exclusiveness toward a "flow of the universal" (AWD, 261) which affirms life, freedom and creativity.

Woolf affirms that within each being, and within the universe at large, there are two separate minds, two separate energies at work: the masculine and the feminine, fact and vision. Through the medium of art, Woolf attempts to provide unity and meaning in order that there be personal as well as artistic creativity, identity, and the balance of what she calls "life in general" (G & R, 136). Such inspiration and selfhood is possible, however, only when there is sexual resolution, that is, only when the transcendent state of androgyny is realised. In the secure state of androgyny there is

ultimate freedom and therefore production and affirmation.

> It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilised and uses all of its faculties. Perhaps a mind that is purely masculine cannot create, any more than a mind that is purely feminine ... the androgynous mind is resonant and porous; ... naturally creative, incandescent and undivided. (AROOO, 148)

Where there is sexual unity there is fertile, autonomous life; only when the mind, or "life in general" (G & R, 136), is in a purely symmetrical state will there be vision and consummation.

The young Katharine Hilbery, in Woolf's second novel Night and Day, very effectively addresses this potent duality in terms of an ultimate search for selfhood.

> Why, she reflected, should there be this perpetual disparity between the thought and the action, between the life of solitude and the life of society, this astonishing precipice on one side of which the soul was active in broad daylight, on the other side of which it was contemplative and dark as night? (N & D, 358)

Woolf's canon dramatizes the perpetual duality which she observes in life as well as within her own being; she will dedicate herself, on various levels and through numerous different deliveries, to harmonizing the life struggle. Her diary reflects this constant flux:

> how my brain is jaded with the conflict of two types of thought -- the critical and the creative; how I am harassed by the strife and jar and uncertainty without. (Cited Novak, XI)

The study which follows is a critical examination of the intricacies and significance of this powerful life-duality and the continual, courageous movement toward a reconciliation which will achieve order and the renewal of life, as supported by Woolf's literature and life. As Woolf herself claims, "nothing matters except life; and, of course, order" (TCR 1, 91).

In exploring the origins of Woolf's vision, six of her novels will be considered as central, beginning with Mrs. Dalloway, and including To the Lighthouse, Orlando, The Waves, The Years, and Between the Acts. Attention also will be paid to the development of her theory as traced in her first three novels, The Voyage Out, Night and Day, and Jacob's Room; furthermore, references will be made to her diaries and letters, short fiction and essays, primarily A Room of One's Own. It is the overall contention of this thesis that, in view of an acute awareness of a universal polarity, consisting primarily of a masculine/feminine severance, Woolf instinctively strives to bridge the dangerous void and to create an affirmative state of peace, meaning, creativity, autonomy, order, the free self, and "the unity of the mind" (AROOO, 146). Woolf does this by artistically balancing and shaping the globe, out of chaos and division:

> ...I ask myself sometimes whether one is not hypnotised, as a child by a silver globe, by life; and whether this is living ... I should like to take the globe in my hands and feel it quietly, round, smooth, heavy, and so hold it, day after day.
> (AWD, 138)

This passage addresses the very crux of Woolf's artistic and spiritual design; the globe stands for the opposition and disorder of life's energies, smoothed and rounded into one entire and androgynous sphere. To create and balance the silver globe in one's palm is to become the genius and artist that Virginia Woolf continues to be.

* * *

A. BIOGRAPHY

Before examining the intricacies of Woolf's theory of androgyny and the reconciliation of opposites, it is important to recognise the origins of Woolf's twofold vision of the universe. Woolf's parents, Julia Duckworth and Leslie Stephen, were in fact overly influential in the development of their daughter's image of and reaction to the sexes. Not only, on many occasions, does she claim to be obsessed with her parents, but she also claims to see them as embodiments of the extremes and dangers of exclusive masculinity and femininity.

> The marriage of Leslie Stephen and Julia Duckworth seemed to Virginia Woolf to present an archetypal pattern of sexual antitheses. Her portrayal of the Ramsays make these contrasts so obvious ...
> (Lee, 117)

Essentially Woolf's parents contributed, no doubt unwittingly, to the creation of the oppositional structure within Woolf's psyche, with the masculine order

of facts, words, and the intellect on one side and the feminine realm of vision, silence, and intuition on the other. What is important to note is Woolf was wholly at ease in neither realm, and with neither parent. Continuous was the tug of dissatisfaction, neither able to fully embrace nor fully reject the paternal or maternal principle. She was simultaneously both attracted to and repelled by the polar spheres, in their exclusive state. Therefore Woolf finds herself, early on, consistently drawn toward something resembling the androgynous principle, a position which somehow embodies both and neither sphere. This inclusive whole transcends the hindering traditions of individual sex roles by balancing the two principles. Woolf will continue to journey closer to such a knowledge, but she must first reconcile her conflicting conceptions of her parents, an attempt which, in one way or another, becomes the core of her creative life.

In its exclusive, unyielding state, Woolf viewed the patriarchal realm as roughly consisting of such forces as outer life, society, facts, practicality, analysis, reason, words, reality and the intellect. She considered the matriarchal sphere as consisting roughly of the inner life, solitude, imagination, creativity, vagueness, intuition, silence, impressionism and the instinct. It seems clear that Woolf's family, and her early introduction to sex roles and gender, permanently shaped her polar view of life. Quentin Bell in his

authoritative biography sheds light upon the origins of this duality:

> As soon as she was able to consider such things, Virginia believed that she was the heiress to two very different and in fact opposed traditions; indeed she went further and held that these two rival streams dashed together and flowed confused but not harmonised in her blood.
>
> (Bell i, 18)

This is perhaps one of the greatest and most revealing comments on Woolf and the formation of her crucial, critical discernment of the world. The two opposing traditions refer directly to the two blood strains which she felt biologically flowed through her: her father's side of the family, the Stephens, and her mother's side of the family, the Pattles. The two rival streams in her blood correspond to the masculine/feminine, fact/vision duality, just introduced, which Woolf will continuously attempt to harmonize. Eventually, Woolf will externalize this opposition within her psyche and come to view the world and each individual being according to the opposing life strains. This twofold perception and the subsequent search for coherence becomes Woolf's singular motivating centre; her execution of this search, however, is varied and rich, touching upon every aspect of her art and thought, and displaying itself on numerous, intricate levels. Ultimately, it becomes Woolf's intention to turn disparity into harmony, and to create a transitory single moment out of a lifetime of antitheses.

The following passage from Bell clearly introduces and demonstrates the opposing sexual structures which Woolf felt flowed and functioned within her:

> The Stephens she saw as a very definable race ... They were all writers... But they wrote like men who are used to presenting an argument, who want to make that argument plain but forcible; seeing in literature a means rather than an end.
>
> Their minds are formed to receive facts and when once they have a fact so clearly stated that they can take it in their hands, turn it this way and that, and scrutinise it, they are content; with facts, facts of this kind, they can make useful constructions, political, juridical or theological. But for intuitions, for the melody of a song, the mood of a picture, they have little use. There is therefore a whole part of human experience of which they fight shy ... or which they dismiss as sentimental humbug.
>
> The Stephens were bold ... They had plenty of moral, physical and mental audacity.
>
> (Bell i, 18-19)

The women in the family were of a conflicting character altogether, and Woolf consequently finds herself confusedly bred from both warring strains:

> The Pattles were an altogether less intellectual race than the Stephens; they had no aptitude for words, they are chiefly remembered for their faces ... they were magnificently formed, grave, noble, majestic, but neither vivacious nor very approachable ... we shall not find amongst them the great pioneers of female emancipation ...
>
> But ... vague benevolence ... the woolly-minded silliness, the poetic gush, the cloying, infuriating sentimentality ...
>
> Here then were the two sides of Virginia's inheritance, an inheritance which was, at all events, real enough in her imagination.
>
> (Bell i, 19-20)

The reality and exercising of this dual inheritance is both the root and soil of Woolf's imagination and art.

In addition to the physical reality of inheritance, emotionally Woolf held conflicting responses toward her mother and father, another vital contribution to this desire for a more neutral and androgynous alignment. The significance of one's image and memory of one's mother is supported by Woolf's claim that "a woman writing thinks back through her mothers" (AROOO, 146). Julia Stephen elegantly fitted the mould of the archetypal Victorian woman: she was beautiful, aloof, dutiful, and submissive. As any young daughter would, Virginia Stephen admired her mother and was drawn in by her kindness and comfort. But Julia was simultaneously stern, critical and outspoken with her children:

> we know that although she could be playful and gay with her children she could also be severe and that, although she looked like a saint, her wit could be almost shocking. Mrs. Ramsay, in To the Lighthouse, although she is drawn only from a child's memories, seems to me more real and convincing ... All the loveliness, the tenderness is there; but Mrs. Ramsay is not perfect; neither she, nor the woman in the Cameron photographs [Julia], was so 'pure' as the lady whom Leslie imagined to be unaware of her own beauty. Mrs. Ramsay's relationship with her husband is not entirely saintly; she is ever so slightly critical; she is capable of mockery.
> (Bell i, 18)

The great affinity between Mrs. Ramsay and Julia will become evident in the chapter on To the Lighthouse. Julia was also greatly impressed by the decadence and the thrill of society, aware of her position and her ability to affect and bring grace to a dinner party and to other

social engagements. To any bystander, Julia may have seemed quite human, committed, exquisitely beautiful and intelligent. But to a young girl, the vision of her mother seems startlingly unreconciled and conflicting. Woolf's mother died when Virginia was thirteen; her emotional responses, therefore, are shaped almost entirely by her memory, with the advantages and disadvantages that such short-sightedness may offer. Essentially, Woolf simultaneously remembers her mother as an elegant, independent and comforting woman, all the while envisioning her as the submissive Victorian housewife who catered to her husband and to society. Such a conflicting view makes it impossible for Woolf to reconcile her belief in her mother and her belief in the feminine sphere. Does she esteem and emulate her, or does she passionately reject her as an embodiment of all that she disdains within society?

For years Woolf observed her mother as hostess and housewife, catering to her husband's every boyish need, submitting to expectations and preconditions. She became a woman in a man's world, at times viewed as a contributor to the "woolly-minded" and "infuriatingly sentimental" side of the Pattles (Bell i, 20). Julia accepted this role and image with little if any uncertainty. Julia Stephen was, by many, viewed as the

> successful Victorian hostess [who had] devoted herself to her guests and appeared to deny herself. She saw to it that they were entertained, drawn out, left with a flattering sense of themselves, and not,

> incidentally, tied to her as a source of all this pleasure. (CS, vii)

Julia played the role elegantly, and her daughter, as a child, esteemed this quality in her mother. But as Woolf grew older and began to recognise the dangers of an exclusively male, superficial and Victorian world, she realised the drudgery of her mother's life. Virginia began to question just how courageous and independent her mother had been and just how responsible she was for the perpetuation of her role. Julia, a product of her environment, was dependent and dutiful, at the expense of her own self. In To the Lighthouse, Woolf addresses the twofold response of respect and disillusionment toward her mother. The artist Lily Briscoe praises and admires, even at times attempts to emulate, her friend Mrs. Ramsay; and yet, simultaneously, Lily becomes enraged and tries to save her from the exclusive, imprisoning role of mother, wife and hostess. Virginia Woolf saw her mother as instinctive, intuitive and visionary, similar to the way she dramatizes Mrs. Ramsay. And yet, she also saw her mother as one who is controlled by the masculine sphere, representing everything that Virginia herself wished to be free of. Both women, Mrs. Ramsay and Julia Stephen, slowly lose their sense of self and creative autonomy to the world of propriety and sex-distinction. Woolf, much like Lily, becomes disappointed at times with the feminine sphere and with her mother's silent resolve to accept her preconceived position. Both Woolf and Lily turn to art as a means of resolution.

Woolf's attraction to and simultaneous distrust of the patriarchal realm is more complex and marked.

> This idea appealed to Virginia Woolf precisely because she was so far from attaining it. She could not help brooding about her grievances, although she repeatedly warned others against doing so. Even during middle age, when she had become a famous novelist, any hint of condescension in a man made her suffer agonies. She was vulnerable because, almost in spite of herself, she felt profound reverence for the masculine intellect, a reverence that did not preclude resentment, even hatred. Leslie Stephen's daughter was still struggling with the ghost of her father, that formidable old man. She was destined to vacillate all her life between defiance and a childlike desire for approval ... If only she could reconcile the masculine, critical side of the mind with the feminine, intuitive side, light with dark. (Marder, 107-108)

As made clear in the earlier quoted passage from Quentin Bell, the Stephen family, the paternal sphere, embodies the intellect and a direct alignment with facts. It also encompasses the educational institutions which Virginia was prevented from attending and toward which she would always hold tremendous resentment. Her father, as well as her brothers, were all Cambridge men. "It was taken for granted that the boys would go to public schools and then to Cambridge. As for the girls, they would, in a decorous way, become accomplished and then marry" (Bell i, 21). For Virginia, the paternal realm soon took on a tone of exclusion, and also of exploitation.

After her mother's death, her half brother George Duckworth became another symbol of male power and dominance.

> At what point this comfortably fraternal embrace developed into something which to George no doubt seemed even more comfortable although not nearly so fraternal, it would be hard to say ... what had started with pure sympathy ended by becoming a nasty erotic skirmish. There were fondlings and fumblings in public when Virginia was at her lessons and these were carried to greater lengths ... when ... George carried his affections from the schoolroom into the night nursery.
>
> To the sisters it simply appeared that their loving brother was transformed before their eyes into a monster, a tyrant against whom they had no defence...
>
> (Bell i, 42-43)

Virginia refers in a letter to another assault by her half brother Gerald: "I still shiver with shame at the memory of my half brother, standing me on a ledge, aged about six or so exploring my private parts" (CS, 438-439). Despite Virginia's obvious and extreme shyness with respect to sexual issues and men, the significant point is not so much the indecency of the situation, but instead her deeply-felt feelings of betrayal and distrust, even hatred, toward the male world. Just as she had put trust and confidence in her mother, only to experience betrayal at her death, and perhaps disillusionment with the later image of her mother's submissive role, so too she had put faith in the male realm, only to feel betrayal and humiliation once again. These feelings of hatred are exaggerated in Woolf when they begin to refer directly back to her father.

Again the essential point to understand is that Woolf's reactions to her parents and the sexual spheres were in fact twofold. She could not wholly reject either

realm, for attached to both were also honest associations with comfort and familiarity, despite the humiliation. Throughout Woolf's life, her father was to be a source of both great admiration and respect, as well as intense resentment and hatred. She shows this double vision in her portrait of her father as Mr. Ramsay:

> His manners can be bleak and cutting, yet he might show a sensitive courtesy that goes beyond mere politeness ... Her examination of Mr Ramsay in To the Lighthouse is like a witness-box account of the pros and cons of his nature. She puts forward one witness, then another, prosecution, defence, poised again and again in combat.
>
> (Gordon, 22)

Of all Leslie Stephen's children, Virginia had the closest relationship with him. She was obviously intelligent and keen, and he was slowly, with apprehension, encouraged by her eagerness. As he generally discouraged women's talents, one can sense the occasional disdain: "Ginia is devouring books, almost faster than I like" (Bell i, 51). Virginia, of course, held him in great admiration, for his adeptness in history and literature and his ease with words. Leslie became very influential as her "teacher of English literature" (Bell i, 51).

Although Leslie was an aloof, famous historian and clearly the man of the house, full of reserve and with a stern manner, he was not a wholly absent father figure. Throughout her diaries and letters, Virginia provides testament to the occasions when he accompanied his children on walks and excursions, read to them and

entertained them. Although a figure of authority, he was not a source of fear. All of this, however, drastically changed with the death of Julia.

> For a long time he abandoned himself to grief; his life, like his writing paper, was confined within a deep black border. His working hours he gave up to a panegyric on "My Julia". He wrote sentimentally and without restraint ...
>
> But, outside the study, the sedative of work was gone. He resolved to teach those lessons which Julia had previously taken with the girls ... it was an arrangement which brought no comfort to anyone ...
>
> At meals he sat miserable and bewildered, too unhappy and too deaf to know what was being said ... in one scene after another ... he broke down utterly and, while his embarrassed children sat in awkward silence, groaned, wept and wished that he were dead.
> (Bell i, 40)

Vanessa and Virginia refer to this period in imagery of darkness, and Quentin Bell continues by describing it as connoting "dark houses, dark walls, darkened rooms ... not only tragic but chaotic and unreal" (Bell i, 40).

Leslie in time becomes the archetypal Victorian masculine, in all of its glory; he begins to embody the male vision which Woolf criticizes and portrays through her art, most particularly in To the Lighthouse. With his wife's death he is suddenly without female support. With no one there to bolster his ego and provide for him, he becomes helpless and weak. Consequently, in a state of childish panic, he turns to his stepdaughter Stella, who, like Julia and Mrs. Ramsay, is

> ready to comfort, to console, to order dinner, to buy coal or underclothes, to chaperone the girls, to keep the house running without alarming expense, to make all social arrangements and in particular to marshal the long procession of sympathising females who came ...[and] she had to listen to her stepfather's confessions and to absolve him.
> (Bell i, 41)

"Nevertheless, patient, reliable, uncomplaining, bowing to the inevitable yoke of her sex, she accepted her tasks" (Bell i, 42). Thus develops the haunting portrait of the needy, overbearing Victorian father, dominating, moulding, and controlling his daughters and the other women about him.

Once again the conflicting emotional reactions Virginia experienced toward the patriarchal sphere become intensified. She moves toward her brothers for comfort and entertainment, only to find them a source of sexual power, fear and exploitation. Similarly, she moves toward her father for affection and comfort, for stability and for literary guidance and inspiration, only, at the age of thirteen, to find him not only a source of shame, but a source of mistrust and dominance. Now not only is Leslie a stern authoritarian figure, but he is simultaneously weak, melodramatic and pathetically dependent.

From her family history, then, derive Virgina Woolf's powerfully opposing emotional reactions toward both the masculine and feminine sphere, toward her father and mother. Feeling at peace in neither sphere, Woolf eventually will move toward a freer, more harmonious,

more life-enhancing realm, one that is creative and androgynous, through her artistic endeavours as well as her personal journeys.

* * *

B. INTRODUCTION TO WOOLF'S THEORY

Now that the foundation for Woolf's dual vision has been examined, it is of essential concern to explore her knowledge of androgyny and the ultimate movement toward the shaping of the globe. Woolf's novels and essays trace a search, if not a struggle, for wholeness, a consuming attempt to put aside her conflict with the masculine and feminine structures, as embodied by her parents and present within her own psyche. She searches for the unimprisoned mind, the "state of mind in which one could continue without effort because nothing is required to be held back" (AROOO, 147). Lyndall Gordon, in Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life, inaccurately asserts that Virginia Woolf's concern with androgyny, the ideal composite of opposite sexes, is merely a "flirtation", and a "short-lived" flirtation at that (Gordon, 188). The following consideration seeks to secure the knowledge that Woolf's pursuit of the composite silver globe is at the centre of Woolf's artistry and innermost self. The mystery of life expresses itself on numerous levels and in numerous lights within her fiction; but the progression toward the creative androgynous self and

condition remains the central source for Woolf's mystical vision.

Stemming from her initial divided response to the sexes, as well as from her increasingly chaotic impression of the universe (as is well known, Woolf suffered several mental breakdowns), Woolf searches for peace and the universal reconciliation of contention. Because of the power and the very nature of this discord, however, pure androgyny is never maintained. Significantly for Woolf's overall vision, the longed for state of resolution is in fact a fleeting, momentary revelation, by nature. It is a knowledge toward which one strives and yet rarely (except in the case of fantasy) ever reaches. It is the artist who ideally comes closest to creating as well as experiencing this transitory experience, however fleeting. Lily Briscoe experiences the consummate "interplay between the inner and the outer, the Internal and the External, the individual and 'life in general', Night and Day" (Brewster, 80); she paints the final line through the centre of her canvas, creating, in the moment of inspiration, the "razor edge of balance" (TTL, 287), at once reconciling the masculine half with the feminine half. Mrs. Dalloway also experiences this fleeting moment of inspiration when she ultimately frees her soul from disparity and social strife. Such a transcendent passage is described as "a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed" (MD, 47). But these moments of wholeness are ephemeral, for Woolf as well as

for the artists she dramatizes. Androgyny as an ultimate, perpetual state is unattainable; it remains an idea toward which one struggles, always moving closer, slowly becoming more smoothed and spherical, less jaded and destructive in the face of contention.

Virginia Woolf works towards this pattern by attempting to create the "razor edge of balance" (TTL, 287) within each work, to "connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left" (TTL, 83). The novel itself, in its ideal state, must be consummate, forming an alliance between the external and the internal. Woolf concedes that the artist must see

> two faces to every situation; one full in the light so that it can be described as accurately and examined as minutely as possible; the other half in shadow so that it can be described only in a moment of faith and vision ... (Bazin, 22)

The concept of androgyny is a mysterious ideal which requires artistic and personal faith.

In her essay A Room of One's Own, Woolf celebrates with precision her conception of the androgynous entity through the metaphor of the taxi-cab.

> Nothing came down the street; nobody passed. A single leaf detached itself from the plane tree at the end of the street, and in that pause and suspension fell. Somehow it was like a signal falling, a signal pointing to a force in things which one had overlooked. It seemed to point to a river, which flowed past, invisibly, round the corner, down the street, and took people and eddied them along ... Now it was bringing from one side of the street to the other diagonally a girl in patent

> leather boots, and then a young man in a maroon overcoat; it was also bringing a taxi-cab; and it brought all three together at a point directly beneath my window... and the girl and the young man stopped; and they got into the taxi; and then the cab glided off as if it were swept on by the current elsewhere.
>
> (AROOO, 144-145)

The "signal falling ... pointing to a force in things which one had overlooked" is in fact the ideal balancing force of androgyny, as it centres itself above the two opposites. The leaf, appropriately, "seems to ease the mind of some strain" (AROOO, 145). The leaf is the inanimate object which symbolizes the force that allows for spiritual cooperation. D. H. Lawrence called this necessary and freeing culmination "the third thing...the pure spark" (Reflections, 317) between opposites, which gives birth to life, beauty and the creative whole: "It is that which comes when night clashes on day, the rainbow...the iridescence which is darkness at once and light, the two-in-one; the crown that binds them both" (Reflections, 261). This is similar to Woolf's conviction; the very source and truth of life is found in the mystery of the globe, as symbolized in her fiction by the oaktree, the lighthouse, the wild goose, the rainbow and "the mark on the wall" (HH, 35). The artist's greatest, most luminous and fleeting moment is represented by the "pure spark", the mystery toward which Woolf's entire soul and psyche journeyed. Therefore, once in the taxi-cab, once in the resolved state, the life of art and procreation continues smoothly, without any obstacles caused by the force of strife, gliding "as

if it were swept on by the current elsewhere" (AROOO, 145).

Such an equilibrium exists on three levels for Woolf: "life in general", the individual, and art. It allows for a transcendent state of coherence. This passing beyond becomes the art of androgyny; Woolf and Lawrence would agree that a third and greater thing results from the strife between the polarised opposites. Importantly, the "third thing" requires the knowledge of both forces. Because of this, advocating androgyny includes not exchanging one exclusive state for the other, but recognising an integration between the two. As Alice Van Buren Kelley admirably notes:

> But neither world can exist without the other if any meaning or order is to be discovered in life. Fact needs vision to help it transcend the limits of objective physical truth. Vision needs fact as the solid base from which to leap into unity ... Vision, to have any meaning, must be seen to function within the disordered factual world. (VBK, 5)

With this new knowledge inspired by the taxi-cab, Woolf goes on to explain further.

> Perhaps to think ... of one sex as distinct from the other is an effort. It interferes with the unity of the mind ... that unity had been restored by seeing the two people come together and get into a taxi cab. (AROOO, 145)

It becomes Woolf's affirmation to reflect dramatically this mysterious "pause and suspension" (AROOO, 144), this transcendent unity in her fictional theory. She holds

firmly that, in all things, there exists a "natural fusion", for "it is natural for the sexes to co-operate" (AROOO, 147). With this belief, Woolf goes forth to assert a new fictional form and to impose on her character a new code of propriety.

Woolf expands upon the taxi metaphor by presenting her theory in more concrete terms:

> But the sight of the two people ... made me also ask whether there are two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body, and whether they also require to be united in order to get complete satisfaction and happiness? ... I went on ... to sketch a plan of the soul so that in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man's brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. If one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her. Coleridge perhaps meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilised and uses all its faculties. Perhaps a mind that is purely masculine cannot create, any more than a mind that is purely feminine, I thought.
>
> (AROOO, 147-148)

Artistically, the androgynous mind

> is resonant and porous; ... it transmits emotion without impediment; ... it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided. (AROOO, 148)

With this background, Woolf's art can accurately be studied in terms of this movement from polarity and discord toward entirety. Woolf's central contention is to convey a coherent and patterned vision; bearing this

in mind, themes of death, history and human interaction, and her artistic concern with form and structure, colour, music and the belief in a non-existent plot, all begin to make significant, patterned sense. David Daiches sees Woolf's antithetical outlook and approach in these terms:

> between the city and the shore, between London and Cornwall ... One might even push the symbolic contrast further, and see an opposition between reason, London, and her paternal heredity on the one hand, and intuition, Cornwall, and the legacy of her mother's family on the other. (Daiches, 3-4)

The following chart, to be considered loosely, should assist in clarifying the overriding duality through which Woolf views the universe.

Masculine	Feminine
intellect	intuition
fact	vision
day	night
society	individual
realism	imagination
clock-time	consciousness-time
land	sea
argument	experience
words	silence

To reinforce the idea that within life's chaotic polarity there is the salvation of androgyny and coherence, Woolf uses the metaphor of the snail in her short fiction piece, "A Mark on the Wall". The symbol of

the snail combines, in one luminous whole, the hard, concrete exterior, with the inner, animate self to express the fusion of two life opposing poles. The story revolves around a woman who, while sitting in her drawing room, begins to feel the pull of the fact/imagination polarity; she looks above her mantlepiece and sees a dark mark on the wall. As she contemplates the mark throughout the story, Woolf's theory of reconciliation reveals itself metaphorically. The lady begins to question the meaninglessness and chaos that continues to present itself on numerous levels within the world. Unable to find a source of order, she compares life to

> being blown through the Tube at fifty miles an hour --landing at the other end without a single hairpin in one's hair! ... Yes, that seems to express the rapidity of life, the perpetual waste and repair; all so casual, all so haphazard. (HH, 37)

This state of perplexity and discord is exaggerated by the force of life's opposition, between imagination and hard fact.

The world of imagination, she holds, is "rather higher up perhaps, rose-shaped blots of an indistinct colour -- dim pinks and blues" (HH, 37), while in perpetual conflict with this is the world of "the surface, with its hard separate facts" (HH, 37). Conscious of the need to realise the peaceful state of balance between the two, she contemplates:

> I want to think quietly, calmly, spaciously, never to be interrupted, never to have to rise from my

> chair, to slip easily from one thing to another, without any sense of hostility, or obstacle. I want to sink deeper and deeper, away ... To steady myself, let me catch hold of the first idea that passes ... (HH, 37-38)

Significantly, the first steadying idea that passes is Shakespeare, Woolf's conception of the ideal, androgynous artist; he combines the two contentious forces by, on the one hand, sitting "himself solidly in his arm chair" (HH, 38) and, on the other, allowing the world of imagination, a "shower of ideas ... from some very high Heaven", to fall "down through his mind" (HH, 38). He reconciles fact with vision, convention with imagination, prose with poetry.

The lady begins to perceive this opposition in the world between fact and vision as a confrontation between the inner and outer worlds. The inner, silent self, "the romantic figure with the green of forest depths all about" (HH, 38), as symbolized by the mirror reflection, continues to contradict the more societal "shell of a person which is seen by other people -- what an airless, shallow, bald, prominent world it becomes! A world not to be lived in" (HH, 38), which is symbolized by the mirror itself. The two forces, however oppositional they are in society, rely completely upon one another out of a need to attain the whole state of resolution. The mirror can shatter easily and thus destroy the image created; similarly, the image can become a void if the mirror is not held properly or at all. Once again the principles rely upon one another for creation and existence.

Similarly, the novelist must balance both entities in order for there to be completion and "the pure spark" (Reflections, 317).

Finally, the woman imagines a world free of exclusion and segregation. Embodying this Woolfian vision, she rises, looks at the mark, and immediately feels "the centre of the world" (HH, 40). The mark offers balance and stability within life's confusion and strife; it is the symbol of androgyny and the vision of wholeness. The mark is Nature, for it is neither man-made, nor simply imagination; it is the salvation that lies somewhere in between. It is the "rose of perfect consummation" (Reflections, 48). "Hence is nature once more at her old game of self-preservation" (HH, 41). The divide must, in order for there to be life, beauty and the preserved self, be resolved into the ebb and flow of balance:

> so Nature counsels you, comforts you, instead of enraging you; and if you can't be comforted, if you must shatter this hour of peace, think of the mark on the wall. (HH, 41)

The mark symbolically prefigures resolution and congruity.

As she fixes her eyes upon the mystery of the mark, the woman feels she has "grasped a plank in the sea; I feel a satisfying sense of reality ... Here is something definite, something real" (HH, 42). The mark is stablizing and ordering; the shape of the globe which we

hold in our hands, or the canvas across which we draw our final stroke, has been realised. The centre has been confronted and with that, the opposition laid to rest. "Thus, waking from a midnight dream of horror, one hastily turns on the light ... worshipping reality" (HH, 42). At last, "the mark on the wall! It was a snail" (HH, 43). The mark, ultimately, symbolically combines the dark, soft inner self, which is contemplative and transient, with the inanimate, hard outer shell, which is permanent and factual. The symbol, once again, embraces the antipathetic spheres which rely upon one another to establish the procreative, stablizing whole.

Although Woolf firmly believes that either sphere in its exclusive state is dangerous, she does find the masculine sphere far more intrusive and dominating. A product of the Victorian age, Woolf is well aware of the potency of society and propriety, and the ability for the masculine realm not only to dominate the feminine realm, but to in fact mould and dictate the barriers.

> Indeed, although she was a champion of the intellect, she opposed any use of it so rigorous and ruthless that it threatened humanity and creativity. (Novak, 9)

The masculine realm, with its conventional, unyielding expectations and societal demands, manages, when not tempered by the feminine instinct, to strip life of its inspiration and beauty.

> I can't help thinking that this is a judgement upon Cambridge generally; it's what happens if you go on telling the truth. You lose all generosity and all power of imagination. Moreover, you inevitably become a complete egoist.
>
> (Cited Novak, 9)

The egoist is beauty, life and creativity's greatest enemy. As depicted in such characters as Peter Walsh, William Rodney and Mr. Ramsay, the egoist moulds the world in his own shadow. In such a one-sided construct, individual freedom and the resolving movement toward truth become a void. It is Woolf's purpose to turn the patriarchal sphere into a procreative contribution to creativity, rather than a negation, by balancing it with its complement, the feminine sphere.

As a novelist, Woolf attempts to convey, through an art form, this same global shape and sense of freedom that she advocates for the individual. Just as the balance of the mind is upset when one sphere remains exclusive, so too the novel loses its equilibrium. Woolf contends that the Victorian/Edwardian novel was threatened by the conventional power of the masculine structure and tradition. The novel, in order to be a complete, respectable whole must be consummate, composed of both light and dark, fact and vision, reason and imagination, the outer and the inner principle. The artist must write with both halves of his/her brain. "As artist and mystic she sought inner harmony, the ideal state of androgyny, which would lead to the renewal of

the individual" (Marder, 125). She strove artistically to merge the two streams of her being and thought, the analytical, the rational and the descriptive, with the poetic, the intuitive and the emotional, thus composing her vision out of the consummate mind.

To create such an ordered sphere, the artist herself must be in perfect, balanced alignment, so that she may reflect the pattern of her art and vice versa. In other words, the novel, or for instance Lily Briscoe's painting, is an artistic reconciliation which requires the fleeting, momentary revelation of the artist, during which inner and outer, the self and society, are in perfect, inspirational harmony. The artist and the art form must contribute to, and therefore reflect, the overall order and sense of harmony. Woolf captures the process involved in creating this new theory of fiction.

> His upper mind works at top speed while his lower mind drowses. Then after a pause the veil lifts and there is the thing -- the thing he wants to write about -- simplified, composed. (Lakshmir, 32)

Through the process of writing, Woolf brings all elements together into one ascendent, procreative pause. For, as Woolf asserts, "it is this writing that gives me my proportions" (AWD, 164).

As maintained in A Room of One's Own, it is absolutely essential that any artist be unconscious of his sex during the creative process. The artist must

transcend exclusiveness, stereotypes and preconceptions, and write from both sides of the brain:

> it is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal to be a man or a woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly. It is fatal for a woman to lay the least stress on any grievance; ... in any way speak consciously as a woman. And fatal is no figure of speech; for anything written with that conscious bias is doomed to death. It ceases to be fertilised ... Some collaboration has to take place in the mind between the woman and the man before the art of creation can be accomplished. Some marriage of opposites has to be consummated. The whole of the mind must lie wide open if we are to get the sense that the writer is communicating his experience with perfect fullness. There must be freedom and there must be peace.
> (AROOO, 156-157)

Hence Woolf's theory of androgyny and peace is applied to the novel. Only in this state will there be the mystery of "perpetual life" (AROOO, 153). Only the artist who balances the masculine principle of outer description with emotion, facts with fantasy, resting "no more upon one sex than upon the other" (AROOO, 155), will tap into the procreative "fountain of creative energy" (AROOO, 151).

Woolf considered the Victorian/Edwardian novel as completely male oriented, impervious and imprisoned. She claimed that such writers as Bennett, Galsworthy and Glass concentrated too severely on convention and externals. In so doing, they overlooked the core of life itself, the evocative belief in the mystery and emotion. She found Joyce too involved with the inner, feminine sphere, lacking order, control and formality. Woolf

believes in an incorporation of the two, for in order to be effective, the two forces must reflect one another. With this belief close in mind, Woolf searched for a new "fictional form that would hold all opposites in a state of momentary wholeness yielding insight" (Novak, xii).

In her famous essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown", as well as in A Room of One's Own, Woolf claims that too many writers compose with only the masculine, analytic side of the mind, rendering them ultimately uncreative and infertile. In her essay, the artist sits behind a woman named Mrs. Brown on the train. Woolf concludes that if any of the Edwardian writers had been on the train, being "exponents of one-sidedness", they would have overlooked the very essence of Mrs. Brown, life itself. As Bell observes, within the masculine sphere, "with facts ... they can make useful constructions, political, juridical or theological. But ... for the melody of a song, the mood of a picture, they have little use. There is therefore a whole part of human experience of which they fight shy" (Bell i, 19). Mr. Bennett would have described in exquisite detail what Mrs. Brown was wearing, and what the rail car looked like. The complete androgynous artist, however, would have captured the mystery of Mrs. Brown by merging description with emotion, "granite" with "rainbow". The complete artist would have spoken to Mrs. Brown in order to validate her innermost self. "Mrs. Brown is eternal, Mrs. Brown is human nature" (TCDB, 103); like the snail, she is the balancer, the stablizer, and therefore must be depicted

as such. Hard facts must be softened by the colours of intuition and inner truth, hence androgyny, hence the globe shaped novel. Clearly, Woolf's art and her expectations for her fictional theory reflect not only her divided psyche but her subsequent need for the ebb and flow which gives birth to one single and constant wave.

This final passage from A Room of One's Own captures Woolf's creative vision and her intention for the shape of art.

> If one shuts one's eyes and thinks of the novel as a whole, it would seem a creation owing a certain looking-glass likeness to life, though of course with simplifications and distortions innumerable. At any rate, it is a structure leaving a shape on the mind's eye, built now in squares, now pagoda-shaped, now throwing out wings and arcades, now solidly compact and domed like the Cathedral of Saint Sofia ... the "shape" is not made by the relation of stone to stone, but by the relation of human being to human being.
>
> (AROOO, 106-107)

Constant is Woolf's search for shape, the mystical rounded shape which significantly embraces the solidity of stone, as well as the flux of emotion, to create a union, the spanning breadth of "granite and rainbow".

* * *

C. ANDROGYNY AND THE EARLY NOVELS

Virginia Woolf's first three novels, The Voyage Out (1915), Night and Day (1919), and Jacob's Room (1922), mark the inception of her theory of androgyny and unity. Though the intricacies of her convictions are not explored in their matured state until Mrs. Dalloway (1925), Woolf's early novels are the seeds of her literary and personal philosophy, which will then continue to develop throughout her expansive career. The continuity which Woolf proposes in her art finds its source in the continuity of her thought:

> Now is life very solid or very shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions. This has gone on for ever; will last for ever; goes down to the bottom of the world -- this moment I stand on. Also it is transitory, flying, diaphanous. I shall pass like a cloud on the waves. Perhaps it may be that though we change, one flying after another, so quick, so quick, yet we are somehow successive and continuous we human beings, and show the light through. But what is the light?
>
> (AWD, 141)

Although Woolf's vision shifts and fluctuates throughout the course of her life, a certain luminous unity bores through its centre, "a bright spark; an aspiration; a concentration; a symbol ..." (MD, 41). This beam of light becomes Woolf's creed: within a world of severance and discord, there is continuity and succession. Her conviction takes root in The Voyage Out, and continues, clear and centred, through to her final novel Between the Acts (1941). It is, therefore, appropriate to explore

Woolf's novels with respect to this continuous beam of light that flows through the core of her works, connecting each work, each "gig lamp", into a central "luminous halo": for, life "is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope" (TCR I, 189). All of Woolf's resplendent novels, then, combine into one luminous core which, ultimately, serves to evoke the vision and shape of "life itself" (TCDB, 111). "As with a rod of light, order has been imposed upon tumult; form upon chaos" (TCDB, 156).

The Voyage Out provides the initial materials with which to form the "luminous halo", as well as with which to create pattern out of the complexities of life. In a letter to Lytton Strachey, Woolf describes her intentions for her first novel:

> to give the feeling of a vast tumult of life, as various and disorderly as possible, which should be cut short for a moment by the death, and go on again -- and the whole was to have a sort of pattern, and be somehow controlled. (CS, 90)

She also wished to express "some of the perplexities of her sex, in plain English" (CS, 48). The Voyage Out, then, is centred on a movement from the tumultuous conventions of masculine and feminine roles, toward an independent knowledge of the innate self, the methodical flux of life. The voyage depicted symbolizes the progression towards a unification of the world of

solitude with the world of society, the feminine with the masculine principle.

Rachel Vinrace, the central character in The Voyage Out, is introduced in her most undeveloped and isolated state, far removed from the equilibrium of androgyny. Having just left the protection of her maiden aunts, Rachel is first seen as a withdrawn, silent figure, playing the piano, aged twenty-four, strictly in her father's care. Through the course of the novel, Rachel will move further away from this isolated existence toward an awareness of the self; she does so by learning to merge the individual with society, instinct with intellect, the solitary world of music with the outer, social world of dance. Rachel progresses from the protection of her father's ship, where she is simply a hostess and "her father's daughter" (TVO, 10), through the graces of the world of society and the intellect. At the novel's end, Rachel begins to come full circle, with her last desire being to return to silence and solitude. This time, however, Rachel sinks into the peace and silence of solitude with the essential knowledge of both worlds. Her solitude is now transcendent for it is complete.

Rachel's psychic wholeness can ultimately be attained only through the freeing act of death. Life's disparity and the masculine world of society and expectations is too powerful for there to be such a mystical unification on earth; hence, Rachel, like

Septimus Smith, will move toward coherence and peace through death:

> she fell into a deep pool of sticky water, which eventually closed over her head. She saw nothing and heard nothing but a faint booming sound, which was the sound of the sea rolling over her head. While all her tormentors thought that she was dead, she was not dead, but curled up at the bottom of the sea. There she lay, sometimes seeing darkness, sometimes light ... (TVO, 348)

Eventually Rachel will die at the bottom of the sea, for "she wished to be alone. She wished for nothing else in the world" (TVO, 348). The inception of Rachel's journey toward a knowledge of her composite self is marked by her assertion that, instead of submitting to the demands of society and sex distinction, she is "going out to t-t-triumph in the wind" (TVO, 19); she does so through the ascendance of death.

Gradually Rachel becomes more and more aware of the interplay between the two forces within the world, and with this knowledge, is able to move toward an awareness of the luminous, freeing centre. A vision of her free self as a part of the world around her begins to take shape:

> The landscape outside, because she had seen nothing but print for the space of two hours, now appeared amazingly solid and clear, but although there were men on the hill washing the trunks of olive trees with a white liquid, for the moment she herself was the most vivid thing in it -- an heroic statue in the middle of the foreground, dominating the view. (TVO, 122)

Rachel envisions herself as a part of the rhythm of life, but also as separate, autonomous and significant.

St. John Hirst is among those in the novel who represent the masculine pole, the cerebral and in fact destructive principle that is organised and dictated by the history of patriarchy. "'It's awfully difficult to tell about women,' he continued, 'how much, I mean, is due to lack of training, and how much is native incapacity'" (TVO, 153). St. John Hirst advocates politics, rational learning, the Classics (prose) and civilization. Lacking any unifying vision, he moves away from love and emotion, and adheres to facts. " 'Nothing moves Hirst ... Unless it were a transfinite number falling in love with a finite one'" (TVO, 141-142). Opposing this proud masculine sphere is Mrs. Dalloway, who has no knowledge of literature or politics, and is confirmed as an individual only through her knowledge of her husband, who is "morally her superior" (TVO, 48). "'Dick, you're better than I am ... You see round, where I only see there'" (TVO, 47-48). "I suppose I feel for him what my mother and women of her generation felt for Christ" (TVO, 48). Her vision of the sexes is distorted enough that she sees her husband as being a "man and woman as well" (TVO, 97). Clearly, he is not androgynous; but Woolf reveals her initial interest in the concept that, within each of us, both sexes exist. At this stage, however, Richard does not exhibit the androgynous nature; he yearns to be "'a leader of men. It's a fine career. My God -- what a career!'" (TVO, 47).

"'Mr. Richard Dalloway,' continued Vinrace, 'seems to be a gentleman who thinks that because he was once a member of Parliament ... they can have what they like for the asking'" (TVO, 34). And again, Richard reveals his exclusive masculinity and his narrow conception of his wife's essence: "'One always has something to say to a man certainly,' said Richard. 'But I've no doubt you'll chatter away fast enough about the babies, Clarice'" (TVO, 46-47). Finally, it is Terence Hewet, who is said to have something of a woman in him, who will stand between the two polarities, and who will subsequently direct Rachel away from distinction toward the instinct and freedom of the jungle. The jungle is primitive and unpopulated, and lies in contrast to the entanglements of civilization. Hewet stands for solidarity: "Hewet brushed aside her generalisations as to the natures of the two sexes, for such generalisations bored him and seemed to him generally untrue" (TVO, 199). In the silence and isolation of the jungle, as in the silence of death, there is the mystical awareness of consummation.

Just as Clarissa in Mrs. Dalloway is essentially freed vicariously through the death of Septimus, so too Terence transcends disparity with Rachel through her death.

> An immense feeling of peace came over Terence, so that he had no wish to move or to speak ... he had come out now into perfect certainty and peace ... The longer he sat there the more profoundly was he conscious of the peace invading every corner of his soul ... they seemed to be thinking together; he seemed to be Rachel as well as himself; and then he

> listened again; no, she had ceased to breathe. So much better -- this was death.(TVO, 360)

In death there is unity and a marriage of opposing energies which cannot be maintained on earth. Both Rachel and Terence will know such congruity, but only through death.

> They had now what they had always wanted to have, the union which had been impossible while they lived ...
>
> It seemed to him that their complete union and happiness filled the room ... They possessed what could never be taken from them. (TVO, 360-361)

The search for such a transcendent harmony continues in Woolf's second novel, Night and Day. The title of course refers directly to the "perpetual disparity between the thought and the action, between the life of solitude and the life of society" (N & D, 358), and the "astonishing precipice" (N & D, 358) between feminine and masculine principles. Katharine Hilbery and Ralph Denham embody the developing balance between the two poles, neither exclusively embracing nor wholly rejecting either condition. The two characters, however, depend upon one another to complete their androgyneity. They are unable, as of yet, to stand singular and apart, as complete androgynous characters. Herbert Marder does justice to their search by observing that

> they resolved to combine the opposites in an experimental marriage. ... Katharine and Ralph, Virginia Woolf implies, are both essentially androgynous; each one combines the opposites within his own personality. But they are both vividly

> aware that a cleavage still exists between their practical lives and their dreams. To put it another way, the function of their marriage, both as symbol and as reality, is to enable them to complete each other, to help each other perfect their androgyneity.
>
> (Marder, 128)

The two opposing spheres in Night and Day refer roughly to the disparity between dreams and the life of reality. Unable to resolve the conflict within their own psyches as well as between themselves, Ralph and Katharine eventually decide to marry, as a means of solidifying a union and thus moving toward the liberating balance. The world of illusion becomes a dangerously powerful element in their relationship, conflicting with the more practical awareness of reality. Katharine believes that Ralph is in love with a romanticized image of her.

> 'You come and see me among flowers and pictures, and think me mysterious, romantic, and all the rest of it. Being yourself very inexperienced and very emotional, you go home and invent a story about me, and now you can't separate me from the person you've imagined me to be ... it's being in delusion.
>
> (N & D, 404)

When Katharine is brought back down to an earthly level and observed by Ralph during the course of a routine day, she slightly loses her mysterious quality. Ralph's love becomes confused and divided, the line between the idealised Katharine and the real Katharine becoming hazy.

Katharine, too, falls in love with an illusion of love. She says to Ralph, "'if you're in love with a

vision, I believe that that's what I'm in love with'" (N & D, 449).

> Not having experience of it herself, her mind had unconsciously occupied itself for some years in dressing up an image of love, and the marriage that was the outcome of love, and the man who inspired love, which naturally dwarfed any examples that came her way. (N & D, 107)

Such a dwarfing occurs when Katharine, believed to be very much in love with Ralph, visits his home and family. Suddenly she must confront the ordinary and mundane side of Ralph; she becomes utterly disillusioned:

> Katharine decided that Ralph Denham's family was commonplace, unshapely, lacking in charm, and fitly expressed by the hideous nature of their furniture and decorations ...
>
> She did not apply her judgment consciously to Ralph, but when she looked at him, a moment later, she rated him lower than at any other time of their acquaintanceship. (N & D, 398)

In order for there to be continuous life-affirmation and a balanced reality, Katharine and Ralph must learn to blend the two forces of illusion and reality into a globe.

William Rodney and Mr. Hilbery represent the superficial function which lives only in terms of propriety, expectations and the masculine part of the psyche. Both are overly concerned with protocol and society's judgment upon them. Katharine and Ralph, however, possess the seeds of both masculine and feminine insights. Ralph believes himself to be "possessed of

complete understanding, not merely of women, but of the entire universe" (N & D, 421). He is both poetic and visionary, and is simultaneously dogmatic and intellectual. However, instead of balancing, the two conditions tend to oppose. Katharine is said to embody "very well the manly and the womanly side of the feminine nature ..." (N & D, 362). The novel begins with Katharine pouring out tea; playing the hostess, she is the "mistress of the situation" (N & D, 1), but, significantly, "perhaps a fifth of her mind was thus occupied, and the remaining parts leapt over the little barrier of day which interposed between Monday morning and this rather subdued moment, and played with the things one does voluntarily and normally in the daylight" (N & D, 1). Daylight of course symbolizes the masculine condition of the externals and the superficial. While Katharine embodies the feminine interests of poetry, solitude and silence, she also demands that life be practical and rigid. Such a demand for unyielding reality is suggested by her love of mathmatics:

> Perhaps the unwomanly nature of the science made her instinctively wish to conceal her love of it. But the more profound reason was that in her mind mathematics were directly opposed to literature.
> (N & D, 40)

The two forces at work within Katharine similarly seem to contrast with one another, rather than to blend into productivity.

Manly Johnson sheds light on the flux of opposites in Night and Day by her argument that

> Night and Day embodies one of mankind's most ancient insights into the nature of the relationship between man and woman: the concept of the universe as a system of two powerful forces interacting and complementing. (Poresky, 49)

Hence, the interaction occurs not only with one another but also within their own innermost selves. Night and Day, typical in many ways of Woolf's overall contention, revolves around

> Moments, fragments, a second vision, and then the flying waters, the winds dissipating and dissolving; then, too, the recollection from chaos, the return of security, the earth firm, superb and brilliant in the sun. (N & D, 537-38)

In other words, out of chaos and flux is born order and solidity. The novel ends with the "night ... far advanced" (N & D, 537); significantly, dawn is about to break, and with that, the centred, balancing point at which night and day, dark and light, feminine and masculine principles, meet and mystically blend into one another. Ralph and Katharine still continue to search, but they search to create luminous "perpetual life" (AROOO, 153), with the emerging promise of reconciliation and consummation which brilliantly hovers above them.

> Together they groped in this difficult region, where the unfinished, the unfulfilled, the unwritten, the unreturned, came together in their ghostly way and wore the semblance of the complete and the satisfactory. The future emerged more splendid than ever from this construction of the present. (N & D, 537)

Lastly, Woolf's third novel, Jacob's Room , is a rather elusive work that centres on the interplay between inner and outer worlds, the individual psyche and its surroundings, thought and action. The author repeatedly asks, "Does anyone know Mr. Flanders?" Significantly, the answer lies in the space between the two poles, the force which hovers above and struggles to make sense out of the intricacies of life and the interplay of life's disparate forces:

> how between man and woman it hangs wavy, tremulous, so that here's a valley, there's a peak, when in truth, perhaps, all's as flat as my hand ... something is always impelling one to hum vibrating, like the hawk moth, at the mouth of the cavern of mystery, endowing Jacob Flanders with all sorts of qualities he had not at all ... Yet over him we hang vibrating. (JR, 70)

Jacob's Room circles around associations and images: a skull, the Acropolis, peasants in the street, Cambridge lectures, a walk by the river; Woolf concerns herself with how these impressions play upon the ebb and flow of life and the world that surrounds us, like a "semi-transparent envelope" (TCR I, 189). Therefore, the suggestions of androgyny and reconciliation can best be handled by symbolism, and the glimpse of association.

In Woolf's later novels, particularly Orlando and To the Lighthouse , the suggestion of the rainbow will become a recurring image which symbolizes the breadth of reconciliation. Traditionally, biblically, the rainbow has symbolized the covenant, the harmony that is born out of conflict. Woolf seems to suggest this luminous arch

through her continual use, not only of the dome shape, but also of the colours in the sky, whether they be butterflies, buildings, or reflections after the rain. In Jacob's Room, the symbol of the butterfly is used repeatedly; Woolf also employs the use of the dome shape, which specifically manages to unify the succession of centuries before us, and the various existing philosophies and thought, under one single, spanning roof. The two symbols together connote the unification which the rainbow brings.

Significantly, the butterfly in Jacob's Room is continuously associated with death. Death has previously been termed as a unifying, freeing force. Connecting the butterfly with death strongly suggests that death is in fact an act which allows for flight, away from the snares of conflict and division, toward the colours of reconciliation and androgyny.

> The stag-beetle dies slowly ... Even on the second day its legs were supple. But butterflies were dead. A whiff of rotten eggs had vanquished the pale clouded yellows which came pelting across the orchard ... (JR, 20)

Shortly after, Jacob notices that the

> fritillaries flaunted along the hedgerows. The blues settled on little bones lying on the turf with the sun beating on them, and the painted ladies and the peacocks feasted upon bloody entrails dropped by a hawk. (JR, 22)

The butterflies suggest not only pattern, but the transience of life as well.

The dome shape is used to suggest unification and a common vision. Under the dome of the reading room in the British Museum, thousands of disparate minds and subjects join together into one common effort, "one burnished letter laid smooth against another in a density of meaning, a conglomeration of loveliness" (JR, 104). Woolf skillfully compares the dome to the skull, "the enormous mind" (JR, 105), which encloses both the masculine and feminine sides of the brain. The skull embraces the complexities of the mind and pulls the disparities together under one arching, and therefore, visionary whole.

> The great mind is hoarded beyond the power of any single mind ... And then there is science, pictures, architecture, -- an enormous mind ...
>
> Jacob stood beneath the porch of the British Museum. It was raining. Great Russell Street was glazed and shining -- here yellow, here, outside the chemist's, red and pale blue ...
>
> The British Museum stood in one solid immense mound ... The vast mind was sheeted with stone; and each compartment in the depths of it was safe and dry ...
>
> Stone lies solid over the British Museum, as bone lies cool over the visions and heat of the brain. Only here the brain is Plato's brain and Shakespeare's ... Plato continues his dialogue; in spite of the rain; in spite of the cab whistles; in spite of the woman in the mews ... (JR, 105-106)

Various ages and philosophers, convictions and efforts, shapes and colours, are all exquisitely brought into unison under the rounded dome of the British Museum. So

too in Jacob's Room , Woolf attempts to unify all of life, with its various shapes and avenues, into one novel, into one room, with regard to one man.

The lighthouse as an image of androgyny and unity is prefigured in Jacob's Room . Cambridge University is compared to the lighthouse itself. Cowan, clearly an embodiment of the one-sided intellect, and Miss Umphelby, suggesting the exclusively feminine sphere, are both skillfully contrasted; eventually the two are brought into a oneness, symbolized by the light of Cambridge and suggesting the lighthouse, which unifies sea and land, woman with man. Both Cowan's and Miss Umphelby's innate natures are reflected in the presentation of their lectures:

> And though ... old Miss Umphelby sings him melodiously enough, accurately too, she is always brought up by this question ... 'But if I met him, what should I wear?'... she lets her fancy play upon details of men's meeting with women which have never got into print. Her lectures, therefore, are not half so well attended as those of Cowan ...
> (JR, 39)

Miss Umphelby suggests the distracted, sentimental woman who simply plays at being intellectual. But meanwhile

> Cowan sipped his port ... the builder, assessor, surveyor ... ruling lines between names, hanging lists above doors. Such is the fabric through which light must shine, if shine it can -- the light of all these languages, Chinese and Russian, Persian and Arabic, of symbols and figures, of history...
> (JR, 39-40)

Neither presentation is effective. The two approaches are too exclusive, and therefore depend upon one another to be creative and affirmative. Cowan is in danger of becoming a Mr. Ramsay, utterly academic, utterly out of touch with the intuitive life. He requires the influence of the feminine sphere. So too Miss Umphelby's distracted effort needs the practical, concrete influence of Cowan.

> So that if at night, far out at sea over the tumbling waves, one saw a haze on the waters, a city illuminated, a whiteness even in the sky, such as that now over the Hall of Trinity ... that would be the light burning there -- the light of Cambridge. (JR, 40)

The two powers, light and dark, land and water, masculine and feminine, depend upon one another for the "secret of perpetual life" (AROOO, 153).

Essentially, Jacob's Room traces Jacob's visionary movement toward independence. In a divided world which asserts that either "we are men, or we are women. Either we are cold, or we are sentimental. Either we are young, or growing old" (JR, 69), Jacob will search for the illuminating power which hovers above and therefore combines the two energies, thus embracing the vision of universality and common blood. Jacob will learn that the young and the old are in fact one, that, once again, the future is born out of the present, the present out of the past. We are not simply man or woman, cold or sentimental, factual or visionary, but rather, a dome-shaped, all-embracing celebration of the two.

In these early novels, then, Woolf planted the seeds of androgyny; they take root in her fourth novel, Mrs. Dalloway , which is the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

"The Privacy of the Soul"

Mrs Dalloway

"But everyone remembered; what she loved was this, here, now, in front of her; the fat lady in the cab. Did it matter then, she asked herself, walking towards Bond Street, did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her; did she resent it; or did it not become consoling to believe that death ended absolutely? but that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived...she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home...part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself."

- Mrs. Dalloway

In this chapter, the theme of androgyny will be examined in terms of a movement toward selfhood, and in terms of a celebration of "the spirit we live by, life itself" (TCDB, 111). In Mrs. Dalloway (1925), Woolf demonstrates the "ebb and flow of things" (MD, 12) by combining the inner and outer principles into one unified shape, "that diamond shape, that single person" or object (MD, 56). Using the unifying force of memory and consciousness, Woolf promotes a venture away from polarity and opposition, toward a continuous, creative revelation. Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith attempt, throughout the novel, to triumph over the artificial forces which threaten the focus and shape of life, namely the corrupt goddesses of "Conversion" and "Proportion". Septimus and Clarissa signify life; they are "inner meaning almost expressed" (MD, 47). And yet the threat against their freedom and private selves is constant. Ironically, the two protagonists will seek their declaration of life through the act of death. Septimus commits suicide in the final pages of the novel, and Clarissa, like Terence Hewet, will experience the mystical peace of liberation through his "defiance".

> This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone. There was an embrace in death. (MD, 280-281)

Continuously struggling toward the autonomous, private life in the face of binary conflict, Septimus and

Clarissa will, eventually, freely embrace vitality through death.

Septimus and Clarissa attempt to preserve "the privacy of the soul" (MD, 192), the creative composite centre which is androgynous by nature and which thereby allows for a private vision, uninfluenced by society. Eventually they will attain their own independent revelation, becoming a part of the pattern and texture of unified life, symbolized by the pause and suspension that comes with ascendancy:

> one feels even in the midst of traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense... (MD, 4)

Out of fleeting experience, memory, and disjointed action, Septimus and Clarissa will create and become part of the continuous "process of living" (MD, 282), just as Woolf creates the shape of the globe out of similar confusion, and as the universe creates its rhythmic ebb and flow out of discord.

> Heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh; ... they love life. In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June. (MD, 5)

In the midst of chaotic life, the transcendent, combining moment continues to exist, hovering, poised above the discord. It is this pause, this interlude which Clarissa and Septimus, amidst division and conversion, will ultimately balance in their palms. Clarissa and Septimus are unifiers, embracers of life; they are boundless; they are fluid and they affirm the mystery of continuous life. Clarissa "would not say of any one in the world now that they were this or were that" (MD, 11), but rather, she views the world as a unified whole, embracing the very flux of life and humanity.

In the course of one unified day, Woolf incorporates Clarissa's history, her diverse nature, and her progressions, as well as the interrelatedness of the divergent group of people and actions which surround her. Each movement, each acquaintance, and each bypasser, though flitting across the page and mind, contributes to the frame of Clarissa Dalloway herself, and to the shape and definition of the novel.

> Every scene would build up the idea of Clarissa's character. That will give unity as well as add to the final effect.
> (Holograph manuscript -- citéd Novak, 113)

Momentary, fragmented impressions, in other words, ultimately coalesce into the one patterned vision of experience, the experience of "the supreme mystery" (MD, 193). The personality and consciousness of both Clarissa and Septimus serve as the centre around which the seemingly disjointed activities and encounters gather,

consolidated. The following passage illuminates the coalescence of past and present, prefiguring the ultimate unification of all opposing life forces into the emergence of "divine vitality" (MD, 216).

> 'Do you remember the lake?' she said, in an abrupt voice, under the pressure of an emotion which caught her heart, made the muscles of her throat stiff, and contracted her lips in a spasm as she said 'lake'. For she was a child, throwing bread to the ducks, between her parents...who stood by the lake, holding her life in her arms which, as she neared them, grew larger and larger in her arms, until it became a whole life, a complete life, which she put down by them and said, 'This is what I have made of it! This!' And what had she made of it? What indeed? sitting there sewing this morning with Peter.
> (MD, 63-64)

Life's fragmentation is emphasised by the universal, antithetical forces which operate within the world at large. The duality in Mrs. Dalloway is shaped primarily by the contrast between past and present, clock-time and consciousness-time, sanity and insanity, privacy and society, poetry and prose. Ensnared by the principles of contention and by the force of boundaries, Clarissa and Septimus, as unifiers, will individually move closer to a knowledge of perpetual, private existence. They "seek for and find a way to preserve their inner freedom in a world where order is both an admirable tradition and the grounds for intolerable coercion" (Novak, 106).

Clarissa and Septimus attempt to keep the naturally existing polarity within themselves and the world about them in utter symmetry. In order to preserve their instinctive selves, they must aspire toward the condition

of androgyny. Septimus and Clarissa are associated with one another because of this effort; they encourage and fulfil the lacking halves of their respective personalities, and, therefore, metaphysically depend upon one another in order to complete their androgyneity. "So that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them ..." (MD, 231). Essentially it is the masculine principle which will threaten the spirit of androgyny and the "privacy of the soul" (MD, 192). The structure is an emblem of war, social consciousness and exploitation; it is dangerous not simply because of what it represents, but rather because it is one-sided and compelling. It is, itself, fatal; because it is one-sided and unyielding, it will threaten the spiritual, expressive core of Clarissa and Septimus. It is not so much what the masculine structure stands for ideologically that is of importance, but rather the fact that, in its exclusiveness, the sexual dichotomy is intensified. Such characters as Sir William Bradshaw, Doris Kilman and Dr. Holmes, embody this resisting sphere of concrete truth, civilization, class consciousness and clock-time; they come to personify sterility and an ultimate denial of life, as Doris Kilman's surname suggests. In their blind pursuit of public success, and in "their love of abstract principles" (MD, 75), they destroy the presence of the more visionary feminine sphere, which, when in co-operation, offers wholeness and renewal. Such exclusiveness renders the individual unproductive, unemotive, and unable to realise the essential, spiritual whole. Alice Van Buren Kelley

addresses the influence of this possessive force upon the individual: "the most destructive element in the factual world is the desire of one man to impose inflexible laws and boundaries on others, to possess their individual souls and make them conform to his own" (VBK, 89). Such is the case with either sexual structure or ideology, when it is absolute and unwilling to greet its complement. Septimus and Clarissa's individual souls struggle for liberation, but continue to be threatened by this larger, unsympathetic societal force.

> Clarissa and Septimus are obsessed in different ways with a compulsive need for personal autonomy. They share a mutual horror of psychological engulfment ... In an act of self-preservation, Clarissa retreats to her attic room; Septimus leaps to his death and salvation. (Henke. Marcus,139)

Hence their attempts, in the face of personal intrusion, to be truthful, creative and complete.

Sir William Bradshaw and Doris Kilman both possess the dangerously one-sided, exploitive attitude. Both represent an invasion upon psychic wholeness, and a perverse denial of life. Sir William Bradshaw, Septimus' psychiatrist, is termed, appropriately, "the priest of science" (MD, 142) and a worshipper of "divine proportion" (MD, 150); he is the archetypal embodiment of distortion and unbending law. He interrupts the flow of life by insisting upon boundaries and classifications. From the very start, Sir William is associated with the confinements and rigidity of "shredding" clock time. Clock time is something to be either overcome (thus

making it a flowing good) or submitted to (making it a solid evil). Sir William Bradshaw is among those who allow time to confine, to distract, and to kill.

> Shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing, the clocks of Harley Street nibbled at the June day, counselled submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chourus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion ... (MD, 154-155)

Sir William, like any principle or ideology which is aligned only with itself, becomes demonic and forceful, possessing the unleashed spirit of "Proportion" and "Conversion". Grossly obsessed with his "exacting science" (MD, 149), Bradshaw "loses his sense of proportion ... he fails", for,"health is proportion" (MD, 149); without perpetual, balanced interraction between both life energies, corruption and insanity ensue.

> Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion -- his, if they were men, Lady Bradshaw's if they were women. (MD, 150)

The spirit of "Proportion" is the establishment which "forces your soul" (MD, 90) away from autonomy and illumination toward its own ironically unproportioned persuasion. Such unbridled and demonic conviction, when out of balance with the emotive, visionary sphere, intrudes violently upon the self and the cohesion of "perpetual life" (AROOO, 153). Sir William "denies all creativity and individuality, let alone the merging of

souls ... the good doctor not only believes this theory but demands that the whole world conform to it" (VBK, 90). In Sir William's world, there is no room for the shaping of one's own life and values.

Disguised as "Proportion", Sir William represents all that is mechanical and infected about modern society, all that is responsible for the corruption and "death of the soul" (MD, 88). His approach to his patients reveals his lack of compassion and disregard for the "process of living" (MD, 282): "you invoke proportion; order rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months' rest ... " (MD, 150) Sir William's remedy is mechanical and learned, utterly impersonal. His proportion is a complete farce, for what he in fact advocates is the unyielding, exploitive spirit of "Conversion", "disguised as brotherly love ... but desir[ing] power" (MD, 151). Sir William, as is compatible only with his own sense of power and masculine ideology, like the Goddess "Conversion", "feasts on the wills of the weakly, loving to impress, to impose, adoring [his] own features stamped on the face of the populace" (MD, 151). "He swooped; he devoured. He shut people up ... his victims" (MD, 154). In the guise of "Proportion", Sir William embodies the masculine spirit in its exclusive unmerging state.

Miss Doris Kilman similarly embodies the one-sided posture of "Conversion". Under the guise of spreading

the holy word of God, Doris Kilman is a self-conscious, "brutal monster" (MD, 17) who symbolizes the corruption and self-centred nature of an established religion. She holds firmly to fact-oriented doctrine at the expense of humanity and compassion; those who disagree with her convictions are assumed evil and misguided. Miss Kilman, intruding into and discordant with the flow of life, is the metaphorical sister to Bradshaw. Both work for the same destructive effort. By praising the "holy" but rigid art of conversion, Doris Kilman threatens creativity and transcendence above establishment. She violates the meaning and spiritual pattern of the world, working in opposition to the continuity and fusion by advocating limitedness and contradiction. She disguises her devouring nature through her pious devotion to religion, much in the way that Bradshaw disguises his "cannibalism" (VBK, 91) through a misleading respect for "Proportion".

> Miss Kilman would do anything for the Russians, starve herself for the Austrians, but in private inflicted positive torture, so insensitive was she, dressed in a green mackintosh coat ... she was never in the room five minutes without making you feel her superiority, your inferiority ... one of those spectres which one battles in the night; one of those spectres who stand astride us and suck up half our life-blood, dominators and tyrants...
>
> (MD, 16-17)

Miss Kilman reflects the disruptive effect that such a posture has upon the serenity of the soul, and on the ability each individual has to prevail independently, in pursuit of life: "this brutal monster! ... at any moment the brute would be stirring, this hatred, which ... made

all pleasure in beauty, in friendship, in being well, in being loved and making her home delightful rock, quiver, and bend, as if indeed there were a monster grubbing at the roots" (MD, 17). Woolf marks the effect that one domineering sexual ideology has upon the other, when it refuses to meet and create the androgynous, liberated complement.

Like Bradshaw, Miss Kilman attempts to possess all other convictions, ideologies and people, and does so by imposing her beliefs upon others. "If she could grasp her, if she could clasp her, if she could make her hers absolutely and forever and then die; that was all she wanted" (MD, 199-200). Her blurred if not demonic vision refuses any knowledge of freedom or wholeness. She meets Clarissa, not with a sense of equilibrium, but rather with a desire to defeat:

> And there rose in her an overmastering desire to overcome her; to unmask her. If she could have felled her it would have eased her. But it was not the body; it was the soul and its mockery that she wished to subdue; make feel her mastery. If only she could make her weep; could ruin her; humiliate her; bring her to her knees crying, You are right! But this was God's will, not Miss Kilman's ... It was to be a religious victory. (MD, 189)

Her need to conquer and to excel brings to mind Mr. Ramsay's obsessive need to arrive systematically at the letter Z, and Sir William's demonic need to prosper, all for the sake of a self-interested cause.

Miss Kilman's dogmatic commitment to religious institutions, rigid doctrine and form, destroys the very knowledge of "the supreme mystery" (MD, 193):
" the privacy of the soul. The odious Kilman would destroy it" (MD, 192). Clarissa, in a moment of revelation asks, "Why creeds and prayers and mackintoshes? when ... that's the miracle, that's the mystery ..." (MD, 193). The flux of each day is beauty in its finest form; it is the inner meaning and the sanctity of one's existence. Clarissa as well as Septimus will seek this mystery of salvation at all costs while Kilman and Bradshaw, unaware of these needs, will destroy the mystery itself.

Clarissa Dalloway is born, and later married, in a society which encourages only the stereotypical roles and expectations for a woman; she is encouraged as a wife, a mother, a hostess and an entertainer, with no consideration of her more masculine, intellectual or even political orientation.

> Oh if she could have had her life over again! ...
>
> She would have been ... interested in politics like a man... She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown ... this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway. (MD, 14)

Consequently, she lives with a powerful need to realise her other half, to achieve wholeness. Septimus will embody the missing part of her nature, that is, the part of her mind which has been overcome by the masculine

conviction of fact and law. Clearly both halves innately exist, and it becomes Clarissa's art to bring the two potentials into active harmony. Similarly, Septimus is forced into an institution of war in which he is immediately expected to be stoic, politically effective and a symbol of the state. Though innately associated with the more visionary, poetic sphere, Septimus is expected to quash his earlier visions and blindly proceed to the line of battle. But, as Woolf suggests in A Room of One's Own, fighting has always been a man's practice and not the woman's. Septimus's existing feminine nature, and thus his potential for wholeness, is utterly stripped from him and he, like Clarissa, is faced with the fate of one-sidedness. Instinctively seeking a more truthful and sympathetic knowledge, Septimus will, against the evils of society and Conversion, attempt to cultivate, not only his innate belief in the feminine, visionary aspect, but the mystery of androgyny itself. When Septimus commits suicide at the novel's end, he comes close to such a mystical knowledge; in freeing himself from the jaws of society, he manages to free Clarissa also, through enlightenment. "Through his suicide, Septimus communicates with Clarissa, who understands his gesture of defiance against an authoritarian society which would force his soul" (Henke. Marcus, 139). "Septimus dies that Clarissa may live" (Henke. Marcus, 126). Their revelations occur simultaneously with one another, therefore strengthening their allegiance to the androgynous vision.

It is now time to explore Clarissa's unique journey towards a more balanced and liberating perspective. It is the exploitive, empowered masculine faction which will directly threaten Clarissa's selfhood, and her ability to break away from her purely domestic sex role. Because her role as mother and wife has been overdeveloped, her selfhood can only be attained by now nurturing the other, external side of her personality. So, ironically, while Clarissa criticizes the masculine structure which has restricted her exclusively to the female role, she simultaneously will strive to align herself with this same masculine role in society; in so doing, she will move closer to a more balanced development and thus clearly recognise her dual, expansive nature. Again, significantly, the two opposing spheres depend upon one another for their existence:

> neither world can exist without the other if any order or meaning is to be discovered in life. Fact needs vision to help it transcend the limits of objective, physical truth. Vision needs fact as the solid base from which to leap into unity. (VBK, 9)

Clarissa needs the elegance of her parties as well as her moments of solitary calm and poetic vision.

It has been suggested above that Septimus and Clarissa are in fact doubles. If such is the case, Septimus, who for the greater part of his life has been forced into the masculine sphere, symbolizes, unnaturally, the purely masculine, objective traits which Clarissa attempts to cultivate in moderation. Clarissa,

then, symbolizes the feminine, visionary sphere that Septimus, in order to attain wholeness, also needs. Together, in unison, Clarissa and Septimus will mystically conspire to recognise two separate, entire androgynous centres.

Alice Van Buren Kelley agrees that Clarissa does indeed discover "the inner meaning" (MD, 47) in the midst of unyielding boundaries: "Clarissa herself presents a woman who comes as close as possible...to achieving a life in which fact and vision are delicately harmonized" (VBK, 101). Kelley contradicts those critics (such as Kate Millett) who find Clarissa to be simply a "glorified housewife" (Moi,115). But it remains Clarissa's contention not to reject her role as housewife and hostess, but instead to celebrate its creative aspect by complementing it with the masculine principles she harbours within her psyche. Clarissa's mystical fusion is symbolized by her party, which is "an offering" (MD, 184) of harmony and rhythm, as well as the event during which her final revelation and identification with Septimus occurs. The party is the mystical culmination, much like Lily Briscoe's painting, during which the artist must "connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left" (TTL, 83), "to combine, to create" (MD, 185). Like the dome of the British Museum, Mrs. Dalloway combines, under one roof, life and death, propriety and instinct, society and privacy, the permanent and the transitory, the material and the spiritual, the past and present. The party is the artistic marriage of opposites

necessary for life-affirmation. "'That's what I do it for', she said, speaking aloud, to life" (MD, 184). In their independent search for the unity of the self, Septimus and Clarissa develop a mystical empathy for one another, both struggling towards and sharing the androgynous vision. The party, a singular harmonious activity during which numerous opposites interact and eventually unify, is an emblem of Clarissa's and Septimus' recognition of the self and the "supreme mystery" (MD, 193).

Just as Sir William becomes an embodiment of mechanical "shredding and slicing" time, so too Clarissa becomes an embodiment of time. Significantly, Clarissa is neither clock-time nor pure consciousness-time, but rather, she is transcendent of time altogether. In the following passage, Peter Walsh is controlled by clock-time, while Clarissa, able to balance the striking toll with the silence of consciousness, denies intrusion and instead affirms "the ebb and flow of things" :

> As a cloud crosses the sun, silence falls on London; and falls on the mind. Effort ceases. Time flaps on the mast. There we stop; there we stand. Rigid, the skeleton of habit alone upholds the human frame. Where there is nothing, Peter Walsh said to himself; feeling hollowed out, utterly empty within. Clarissa refused me, he thought. He stood there thinking, Clarissa refused me.
>
> Ah, said St. Margaret's, like a hostess who comes into her drawing-room on the very stroke of the hour and finds her guests there already. I am not late. No, it is precisely half-past eleven, she says. Yet, though she is perfectly right, her voice, being the voice of the hostess, is reluctant to inflict its individuality. Some grief for the past holds it back; some concern for the present. It is half-past eleven, she says, and the sound of

> St. Margaret's glides into the recesses of the heart and buries itself in ring after ring of sound, like something alive which wants to confide itself, to disperse itself, to be, with a tremor of delight, at rest -- like Clarissa herself, thought Peter Walsh, coming down the stairs on the stroke of the hour in white. It is Clarissa herself, he thought, with a deep emotion, and an extraordinarily clear, yet puzzling, recollection of her, as if this bell had come into the room years ago, where they sat at some moment of great intimacy, and had gone from one to the other and had left, like a bee with honey, laden with the moment. (MD, 73-75)

Ironically, the role of hostess, mother and dutiful wife is essentially one inspired by and upheld by masculine society and tradition. It is, therefore, appropriate to consider Clarissa's adherence to social propriety and protocol as her "masculine" orientation (that is, conventional, societal, established, external). What could easily become a confining, superficial existence, Clarissa attempts, through the vision of androgyny, to make freeing and creative. Peter Walsh comments upon the existing public and status-conscious aspects of Clarissa, both of which are traditionally regarded as masculine concerns:

> The obvious thing to say of her was that she was worldly; cared too much for rank and society and getting on in the world -- which was true in a sense; she had admitted it to him. (MD, 115)

It is true that Mrs. Richard Dalloway performs as a society hostess out of a sense of duty as well as out of a fascination with success, fame and wealth. But, when she allows the more independent Clarissa to surface, she transcends denial and, instead, is able to turn social consciousness into creative life.

> They thought, or Peter at any rate thought, that she enjoyed imposing herself; liked to have famous people around her; great names; was simply a snob ... Richard merely thought it foolish of her ... It was childish, he thought. And both were quite wrong. What she liked was simply life. (MD, 183)

Clarissa's masculine, perhaps superficial element, is an enhancer because, instead of being exclusive, it is tempered by her imaginative tenets. "And it was an offering; to combine, to create" (MD, 189). She is only able to create such an offering by reconciling the opposition about her and within her, for, as Ralph Freedman asserts, the crux of Clarissa's artistry lies "in the opposition of an external world of manners and an internal symbolic world" (Freedman, 88).

But Clarissa is not always able to transcend class-consciousness and elitism, and it is this preoccupation which at times aligns her exclusively with the imposition and snobbery of the masculine sphere. In the following passage, one senses again the danger that develops when one sphere dominates and then threatens the other. Lady Bruton, clearly a woman of high society, invites Richard Dalloway to lunch and excludes Clarissa. Suddenly, losing any sense of free identity, Clarissa submits to the power of rank and society:

> feeling herself suddenly shrivelled, aged, breastless, the grinding, blowing, flowering of the day, out of doors, out of the window, out of her body and brain which now failed, since Lady Bruton, whose lunch parties were said to be extraordinarily amusing, had not asked her. (MD, 45)

The identity which is affirmed only through social elitism is revealed. Such a demise threatens to overpower the generative sphere, as Clarissa finds herself suddenly old, unwomanly, lifeless. She stands incomplete, unbalanced, far away from the composite, fertile self.

Just as Sir William and Doris Kilman are exclusively aligned with the spirit of "Proportion" and "Conversion", possession and power, so too Clarissa can reveal such an orientation. Clarissa often attempts "to make people think this or that" (MD, 14), just as Mrs. Ramsay attempts to orchestrate and matchmake. She wants only the right people at her party; she wants them to be a part of her, to love her, to admire her grace, to be a reflection of her , to flow and interfere with nothing, to fit delicately into her finely arranged pattern.

> But why should she invite all the dull women in London to her parties? Why should Mrs. Marsham interfere? (MD, 178)

Clarissa will reveal her own innate possessiveness by wanting Doris Kilman to have nothing to do with her daughter Elizabeth. "Anyhow they were inseparable, and Elizabeth, her own daughter, went to Communion" (MD, 16). She introduces Elizabeth to her old suitor Peter Walsh: "'Here is my Elizabeth', said Clarissa, emotionally, histrionically, perhaps" (MD, 71). Peter notices her possessiveness:

> The way she said 'Here is my Elizabeth!' -- that annoyed him. Why not 'Here's Elizabeth' simply? It was insincere. (MD, 73)

However, Clarissa is saved from being overpowered by such a domineering self-consciousness by her awareness of its hypocrisy; she is aware of its ability to destroy the soul and is therefore sure to maintain a personal equilibrium by cultivating her more solitary and thoughtful impulses. She recognises her affinity with the likes of a Miss Kilman and, horrified, rejects it.

> It rasped her, though, to have stirring about in her this brutal monster! to hear twigs cracking and feel hooves planted down in the depths of that leaf-encumbered forest, the soul; never to be content quite, or quite secure, for at any moment the brute would be stirring, this hatred, which ... gave her physical pain, and made all pleasure in beauty, in friendship, in being well, in being loved ... quiver, and bend as if ... the whole panoply of content were nothing but self love! this hatred!
>
> Nonsense, nonsense! she cried to herself, pushing through the swing doors of Mulberry's the florists. (MD, 17)

The ultimate expression of her disdain for the traditional mother/wife role is marked by Clarissa's Lesbian attraction to Sally Seton. Consistently Clarissa looks for independence in her relationships with men. In her youth, she rejects Peter Walsh's marriage proposal, for he attempts to convert her and is too closely associated with the world of decorum and convention. A comrade of both Sir William and Doris Kilman, Walsh sacrifices life itself to the upholding of the concrete, external world around him; he misses much of the mystery and beauty in life while attending to precision. In his

unmerciful search for concrete truth, Peter overlooks humanity.

> But Peter -- however beautiful the day might be, and the trees and the grass, and the little girl in pink -- Peter never saw a thing of all that ... It was the state of the world that interested him; Wagner, Pope's poetry, people's character eternally ...
> (MD, 9)

His pointed demand for "impossible things" (MD, 95), for cold absolutes and sharp facts is, rather heavy-handedly, symbolized by his fascination with the opening and closing of his jackknife, clearly suggesting the phallus: "always playing with a knife. Always making one feel, too, frivolous; empty-minded; a mere silly chatterbox, as he used" (MD, 65). His masculine commitment to success, to unyielding dogma and to his sense of honour, encourages his sexism and his sharp intrusion upon the freedom of others.

But Clarissa seeks to remain autonomous in her relationship with men, unrestrained by their image of themselves. She appears to have this understanding in her marriage with Richard; but, upon a closer look, the "gulf" which resides between them is due, not so much to his liberalism and ability to give her what she needs, but rather to his lack of passion and inability to communicate.

> Bearing his flowers like a weapon, Richard Dalloway approached her; intent he passed her; still there was time for a spark between them -- she laughed at the sight of him, he smiled good-humouredly,

> considering the problem of the female vagrant; not that they would ever speak. (MD, 176)

There is a more passionate, communicative independence in Clarissa's relationship with Sally, one that cannot exist in her marriage with Richard.

> And there is a dignity in people; a solitude; even between husband and wife a gulf; and that one must respect, thought Clarissa ... for one would not part with it oneself, or take it, against his will, from one's husband, without losing one's independence, one's self-respect -- something, after all, priceless. (MD, 181)

She finds this free "self-respect", and "solitude", without struggle or despair, in her love for Sally Seton.

With Richard there remains a sense of entrapment, a sense of ennui, and Clarissa feels she must fight for the peace of solitude. At times losing her breadth and centre to her role-playing, she retreats to the attic room, to the inspring "room of one's own" where she is neither sex, where she is complete and, paradoxically, part of a large humanity. She is not Mrs. Richard Dalloway, but purely Clarissa, solitary and expansive, for "it spread ever so far, her life, herself" (MD, 12). Suzette Henke comments:

> Like Septimus Smith, Clarissa fears ego-engulfment and disintegration of the self. She cannot respond to male demands for sympathy and refuses to condone emotional symbiosis in marriage. She feels that she has disappointed Richard by her inability to offer him the kind of romantic passion usually expected in heterosexual relationships ...
>
> Yet in moments of candour and intimacy, she responds passionately to the sensuous beauty of other women. (Henke. Marcus, 135)

With women Clarissa is free of socialized stereotypes and, subsequently, the vital "inner meaning [is] almost expressed" (MD, 47). With Richard "she could see what she lacked. It was not beauty; it was not mind" (MD, 46). Instead it is the delicate, liberating mergence of the two forces within her, the "something central which permeated; something warm which broke up the surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman" (MD, 46). She finds the freedom to exist both in solitude as well as in harmony with humanity through her love of women; such a celebration frees her from the expectation of her one-dimensional role:

> she could not resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman ... she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt. Only for a moment; but it was enough. (MD, 46-47)

When in unison with Sally, Clarissa experiences the mystical revelation of renewal and of complete, healing balance. She is relieved of her artificial identity, that which lacks the insight of truth.

> It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance ... extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores! Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. (MD, 47)

Significantly, Sally's kiss brings about this "illumination" and the simultaneous freedom from her imposed sexual identity. Appropriately, it is Richard

who will interrupt Clarissa's honouring of the past and her memory of this restorative moment. "It was over -- the moment ... there contrasted ... the lit house was suddenly darkened, and if she raised her head she could just hear the click of the handle released as gently as possible by Richard" (MD, 47).

It is Sally who is concerned about saving Clarissa from the doom of role playing and conventions, "from the Hughs and the Dalloways and all the other 'perfect gentlemen' who would 'stifle her soul' ... make a mere hostess of her, encourage her worldliness" (MD, 114). Sally frees her by loving her and meeting her as herself, as Clarissa, as "that diamond shape, that single person" (MD, 56). Unlike her feelings for Richard or Peter, Clarissa celebrates "the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally. It was not like one's feeling for a man ... it had a quality which could only exist between women" (MD, 50). The elusive quality between women contributes to her redemption. Clarissa recalls the thrill of meeting Sally in the garden at Bourton:

> Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life ... Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! ... And she felt that she had been given a present ... a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which ... she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling! (MD, 52-53)

Once again it is the masculine principle which interrupts this ecstasy and illumination, creating the

most caustic of conflicts, destroying the radiance which Clarissa holds in her palm.

> Peter faced them ...
>
> It was like running one's face against a granite wall in the darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible!
>
> ... she felt his hostility; his jealousy; his determination to break into their companionship.
> (MD, 53)

When the male psyche becomes too possessive and controlling, the radiant "infinitely precious" equilibrium fails to be met; however, when Clarissa's feminine knowledge is encouraged, she is able to come close to religious, artistic ecstasy. By merging her societal and status-conscious sphere with her more humanitarian, visionary psyche, Clarissa preserves the knowledge of the "secret deposit of exquisite moments" (MD, 43). For, ultimately, Clarissa believes that "ecstasy, love, and revelation must be shared, must overflow into the factual world ... Clarissa determines never to bow to the jaws of limitation set up in society, but instead to carry a sense of freedom and love into her world" (VBK, 104).

Clarissa flees from the confines of the external world to the solitary peace and freedom of her attic room. There, she attains the composite knowledge of herself.

> Each [month] still remained almost whole, and, as if to catch the falling drop, Clarissa ... plunged into

> the very heart of the moment, transfixed it, there -- the moment of this June morning ... seeing the glass ... collecting the whole of her at one point ... seeing the delicate pink face of the woman who was that very night to give a party; of Clarissa Dalloway, of herself...
>
> That was her self -- pointed; dartlike; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together ... into one centre, one diamond, one woman who sat in her drawing-room and made a meeting-point, a radiancy no doubt in some dull lives ... (MD, 54-55)

In her attic room she creates harmony, not only within herself, but within her vision of the world. As she gathers the green silk about her, she gathers the disparate moments of the past and present into one consistent thought and sound:

> Quiet descended on her, calm, content, as her needle, drawing the silk smoothly to its gentle pause collected the green folds together and attached them, very lightly, to the belt. So on a summer's day waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall; and the whole world seemed to be saying 'that is all' ... until even the heart in the body which lies in the sun on the beach says too, That is all. Fear no more, says the heart ... which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall. (MD, 58-59)

There is symmetry now all about the body, the mind and the universe. Clarissa is the artist of unity, making each moment a culmination.

Appropriately Peter Walsh will once again bring the intrusive, external world into her cloistered, sanctified world. "She made to hide her dress, like a virgin protecting chastity, respecting privacy ... he took out a large pocket-knife and half opened the blade" (MD, 59-60).

In her solitude, she is unexploited, able to visualize her quest for radiance and the supreme summing up of life. When Clarissa positively merges her public side with the expansive internal vision, she is able to transcend all societal conditions and thus relish the freedom and fineness of her composite self. The closer she comes to the knowledge of self, the further removed she is from the entrapping evils of "Proportion" and "Conversion". Therefore, in the midst of her party and her creation, she is the artist of life; she moves in and out of the crowd, in "a silver-green mermaid's dress. Lolloping on the waves ..." (MD, 264); Clarissa ebbs and flows, shifts and merges, "collect[s] and fall[s]", all the while embracing the solidity of equilibrium: "Lolloping on the waves and braiding her tresses she seemed, having that gift still; to be; to exist; to sum it all up in the moment as she passed" (MD, 264). She is the global artist who touches every aspect of life; she both resides in its very centre, as well as hovers above it, distant and mysterious, the transparent, "luminous halo" of balance. She "turned, caught her scarf in some other woman's dress, unhitched it, laughed, all with the most perfect ease and air of a creature floating in its element" (MD, 264).

Clarissa's parties are the culmination of her artistry, her blending of inner and outer, past and present, life and death. As Woolf writes in her essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown",

> Both in life and in literature it is necessary also to have some means of bridging the gulf between the hostess and her unknown guest on the one hand, the writer and his unknown reader on the other.
> (TCDB, 104)

She touches and becomes a part of everyone, everything, instinctively: "She made her drawing-room a sort of meeting-place; she had a genius for it ... but she did it genuinely, from a natural instinct" (MD, 116-117). Her parties become the equalizing force which grant the secret of life and the "exquisite moment". "'That's what I do it for', she said, speaking aloud, to life" (MD, 184). Her parties are the ultimate image of androgyny, turning perpetual strife and discord into ascending art and the single moment.

> But to go deeper, beneath what people said (and these judgements, how superficial, how fragmentary they are!) ... what did it mean to her, this thing she called life? ... Here was So-and-so in South Kensington; some one up in Bayswater; and somebody else, say, in Mayfair. And she felt ... what a waste; and she felt what a pity; and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it was an offering; to combine, to create; but to whom? ...
>
> An offering for the sake of offering, perhaps. Anyhow, it was her gift. (MD, 184-85)

Clarissa feels the exhilaration that an artist feels, that Lily Briscoe in fact feels, when she steps back to view her work in the midst of creation: Clarissa "had felt that intoxication of the moment, that dilatation of the nerves of the heart itself till it seemed to quiver, steeped, upright ... " (MD, 265). Clarissa captures the enigma of "life in general" (G & R, 136), for "mystery

had brushed them with her wing" (MD, 20). Significantly, Clarissa will not experience the supreme revelation until Septimus' death, at the end of the novel, in the midst of her party.

Septimus Warren Smith, too, struggles throughout the novel to preserve the creative "privacy of the soul" (MD, 192), a privacy which for him continues to be invaded by a militant society, advocating sexual conformity and regulations. As a youth, the feminine element in Septimus' psyche flourishes, but also manages to remain in realistic balance with the rest of his innermost self. When the war breaks out, however, he is forced to suppress his instincts and intuitive emotions, and to become a part of the cause, rational, stoic, and ruthlessly directed. Just as Clarissa was forced, often unwillingly, into the traditions of mother and wife, so too Septimus is forced unwillingly into adopting a brute posture. Septimus' intuitive androgynous nature struggles to find its equilibrium; unable to exist comfortably as an androgynous creator in a man's world, Septimus frees himself and his soul through the act of death.

Woolf introduces Septimus as "a border case, neither one thing nor the other" (MD, 127), suggesting that Septimus is neither wholly at ease in the external

material realm, nor fully aligned with feminine vision and intuitions; he is neither male nor female, but rather a liberating representative of the two. Septimus, then, will seek a satisfying means of expressing his comprehensive artistic vision in a world full of barriers and preconditions.

From the outset of the novel, one senses Septimus' innocence and purity of thought, and the eventual unfortunate corruption which society and war will provoke:

> London has swallowed up many millions of young men called Smith ... there were experiences, again experiences, such as change a face in two years from a pink innocent oval to a face lean, contracted, hostile.
>
> (MD, 127-128)

Young, emotional and with a passion for poetry, Septimus is subject to the hostility and force of the social order, which seeks to possess his soul, and in time, will strip him of his instinctively expansive nature.

Septimus, before the war, is undoubtedly at ease within the feminine realm. He is a poet. He reads Shakespeare, Woolf's image of the ultimate androgynous writer. He falls in love with Isabel Pole, his tutor, who nurtures his poetical and dreamy nature.

> Was he not like Keats? she asked; ... and lit in him such a fire as burns only once in a lifetime, without heat, flickering a red gold flame infinitely ethereal and insubstantial ... [he] dreamed of her, wrote poems to her ... any night about this time, and found him writing; found him tearing up his

> writing; found him finishing up a masterpiece ... devouring Shakespeare ...
>
> (MD, 128-129)

The war manages to bring a violent end to his idealism and poetic vision, as well as to destroy his private aspirations. Naively, romantically, Septimus enters war, as though entering the set of a Shakespeare play:

> He went to France to save an England which consisted entirely of Shakespeare's plays and Miss Isabel Pole in a green dress walking in a square. There in the trenches the change which Mr. Brewer desired when he advised football was produced instantly; he developed manliness; he was promoted; he drew the attention, indeed the affection of his officer, Evans by name. (MD, 130)

Slowly Septimus moves away from his redemptive knowledge and closer to an exclusively militant posture, a posture which makes him a stranger to his own soul.

It is suggested that Evans and Septimus, like Sally and Clarissa, share a homosexual attraction for one another, certainly suggesting Septimus' androgynous nature. But the war manages to poison this liberal, love-affirming "marriage".

> They had to be together, share with each other ... But ... when Evans was killed, just before the Armistice, in Italy, Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognising that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably. The War had taught him. It was sublime. He had gone through the whole show ... He was right there. The last shells missed him. He watched them explode with indifference ... he could not feel. (MD, 130-131)

Clarissa becomes a product of high society while Septimus becomes a slave to war; their greater allegiance to the more truthful vision becomes weakened as they simply become another part of the machine:

> fear came over him -- he could not feel. He could reason; he could read ... his brain was perfect; it must be the fault of the world then -- that he could not feel ...
>
> it might be possible that the world itself is without meaning. (MD, 132-133)

Septimus becomes a husband, a provider, an officer, assuming the masculine stances that go along with such positions. But he knows well that,

> Love between man and woman was repulsive to Shakespeare. The business of copulation was filth to him before the end. But, Rezia said, she must have children. They had been married five years. (MD, 134)

Septimus' longings for repose grate severely with the spirit of convention.

> Gulled by the feverish rhetoric of nationalism, Septimus consented to sacrifice individual liberty to collective aggression. As a soldiér in battle, he became a cog in the machinery of death and tacitly condoned the insanity of war. He returned from the inferno like Lazarus, only to create his own private hell. (Marcus. Henke, 139)

Woolf addresses the fatal nature of exclusive sexual roles and establishments, which remain singular and impervious, unwilling to unite and become procreative. She addresses war, Sir William Bradshaw, Dr. Holmes,

Doris Kilman, politics and "Amelia What'shername, handing round cups of tea punctually at five -- a leering, sneering obscene little harpy" (MD, 135). Each entity stands for power and possessiveness, the corruptive forces which divide and invade privacy and personality, which destroy beautiful visions, human nature, and life's emancipating moment. They alone succeed in driving Septimus mad: "Human nature, in short, was on him -- the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils" (MD, 139).

Ironically, Septimus will be lucid and coherent in his insanity, sane in a world of lunatics. His insanity and his eventual death prevent him from giving away the "something central which permeated" (MD, 46), the rod of light which preserves one's soul. Maintaining his privacy, he is sensible in his insanity, and life-giving in his death. He senses that debased human nature, embodied by Dr. Holmes, is about to take his soul captive.

> Once you stumble, Septimus wrote on the back of a post card, human nature is on you. Holmes in on you. Their only chance was to escape... (MD, 139)

Septimus escapes, and simultaneously saves Clarissa from "the repulsive brute"; by jumping to his death, Septimus, with Clarissa, greets a larger, freer humanity.

Just before Septimus' suicide, there is a significant, creative moment of peace, prefiguring the ultimate repose at the end of the novel. Septimus sits

with his wife Rezia, collecting flowers and colours and making them into hats. Temporarily in sympathy with the artistic, healing sphere, he embraces the moment of wholeness and health, as Clarissa does when she sews her dress and when she combines and creates during her party. For a moment, there is lucidity, stillness, transcendence:

> Miracles, revelations, agonies, loneliness, falling through the sea, down, down into the flames, all were burnt out, for he had a sense, as he watched Rezia trimming the straw hat ... of a coverlet of flowers. (MD, 216)

Using his fingers, combining colours and flowers and shapes, the artist creates balance and life:

> he would wait in this warm place, this pocket of still air, which one comes on at the edge of a wood sometimes in the evenings, when, because of a fall in the ground, or some arrangement of the trees ... warmth lingers, and the air buffets the cheek like the wing of a bird. (MD, 218)

Septimus' flight toward something freer, beyond this world of sexual snares and expectations, is foreshadowed during this moment of tranquility:

> It was wonderful. Never had he done anything which made him feel so proud. It was so real, it was so substantial, Mrs. Peters' hat ...
>
> He had become himself then, he had laughed then. (MD, 218)

The art of creation, the art of bringing separate fragments into an organised pattern, brings Septimus into contact again with his private insight and self.

While Clarissa ultimately confirms common life and truth at her party, Septimus affirms the same, paradoxically, through his death. In Woolf's notes on Mrs. Dalloway she writes: "All must bear finally upon the party at the end; which expresses life in every variety ... while Septimus dies" (Cited Novak, 113). The novel's end, then, appropriately merges life with death. The escape towards freedom, the illumination which is born from a realisation of the self and oneness, occurs simultaneously. Upon hearing the news of Septimus' death, Clarissa thinks:

> The young man had killed himself... She felt somehow very like him -- the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away ... He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. (MD, 283-284)

Clarissa identifies with this stranger and feels the sense of dignity and triumph which he inspires. In the midst of her party, she begins to realise the mystical continuity, and the full significance of Septimus' death:

> She had once thrown a shilling into the Sepentine, never anything more. But he had flung it away. They went on living (she would have to go back; the rooms were still crowded; people kept on coming). They ... they would grow old. A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter. This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the

> impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone. There was an embrace in death. (MD, 280-281)

Death becomes the answer to "the impossibility of reaching the centre" (MD, 280). Death becomes, as Jane Novak puts it, "the pull toward the still point of release from striving" (Novak, 13). Septimus and Clarissa will reap the serenity of relief through death, for each of them holds and preserves their "treasure" (MD, 182).

This consistent motif of death and androgyny links the two main characters, who significantly never meet in the course of the novel, only in their revelation. Death and the androgynous vision go hand in hand, for androgyny, as we know, can only be permanently sustained through death; it hovers above the earth, only to be grasped through the revelation of death. Both characters repeat Shakespeare's lines, "Fear no more the heat o' the sun," referring to one's fear of death and engulfment. But Clarissa and Septimus will lay their fear to rest, and transcend time through their awareness of the greater life which awaits them. The following passage addresses Clarissa's fear of being destroyed by time.

> 'Fear no more,' said Clarissa. Fear no more the heat o' the sun ... But she feared time itself, and read on Lady Bruton's face, as if it had been a dial cut in impassive stone, the dwindling of life; how year by year her share was sliced; how little the margin that remained was capable any longer of stretching, of absorbing ... (MD, 44)

But just after Septimus dies, Clarissa repeats Othello's line, " 'If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy,'" (MD, 281). Septimus and Clarissa will approach death, literally and figuratively, with a similar sense of contentedness, for "he plunged holding his treasure" (MD, 281). As Alice Van Buren Kelley comments, "Death, though it is an ending in one sense, is in another sense a greater beginning in the visionary unity that succeeds it" (VBK, 109).

Though Clarissa's final revelatory moment is inspired by Septimus, it occurs as she stands by her window, watching the old lady across from her prepare for bed. Clarissa immediately feels a kinship with this woman who climbs the stairs and lives her own private, quiet life. The woman simply represents "the spirit we live by" (TCDB, 111). She is unaffected by the external world of distortion, and yet is aware of it and can see it through her window. She is a part of the world and of the party, and yet she is removed, she is poised above, indifferent. Earlier in the day, outraged by Doris Kilman, Clarissa had stood by the very same window and wondered,

> Why creeds and prayers and mackintoshes? when, thought Clarissa, that's the miracle, that's the mystery; that old lady, she meant, whom she could see going from chest of drawers to dressing-table. She could still see her. And the supreme mystery which Kilman might say she had solved, or Peter might say he had solved, but Clarissa didn't believe either of them had a ghost of an idea of solving, was simply this: here was one room; there another. Did religion solve that, or love? (MD, 193)

The solution is found in pure life itself, the existence of everyday life, "the daily miracle" (TTL, 240), the passing of an estate car, the buying of flowers, the meeting of an old suitor, the moment; for, "moments like these are buds on the tree of life" (MD, 43). Only Clarissa and Septimus will understand the mystery, because through the vision of androgyny, they will balance in their palms the solved mystery: "into the midst of ordinary things the finger fell making the moment solemn" (MD, 193).

Upon hearing of Septimus' death, Clarissa begins to sense the hypocrisy and the hollowness of social successes and triumphs, "her disaster -- her disgrace" (MD, 282). Septimus had been courageous while she had simply stood there in her green dress, ineffectual. She realises that, "in this profound darkness", she was "forced to stand here in her evening dress. She had schemed; she had pilfered ... She had wanted success"; she had at times "lost herself in the process of living" (MD, 282). She has come close to losing herself to the "disaster" and "disgrace" of status, while Septimus had almost lost himself to the "disaster" of patriotism. "But that young man had killed himself" (MD, 282). Septimus had triumphed, and with that, they both will be cleansed; they will transcend superficialities and stand poised, emblems of balance and "the spirit we live by". Clarissa parts the curtain and senses her affinity with the flow of life:

> Oh, but how surprising! -- in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her! She was going to bed. And the sky ... there it was -- ashen pale, raced over quickly by tapering vast clouds. It was new to her. The wind must have risen. She was going to bed in the room opposite. It was fascinating to watch her, moving about, that old lady, crossing the room, coming to the window. Could she see her? It was fascinating, with people still laughing and shouting in the drawing-room, to watch that old woman, quite quietly, going to bed ... The young man had killed himself ... She felt somehow very like him ...
> (MD, 283)

The old woman who "stared straight at her" is much like Mrs. Brown. She too is human nature, in its most ordinary, but simultaneously, in its most expansive and eternal form. She is "ordinary life" (TTL, 240). She is a moment, a concentration amidst a strikingly diverse gathering. She is a clear, lighted image through a blurred window.

All aspects of life have joined together in Clarissa's home: Mrs. Durrant from Jacob's Room appears, as does Mrs. Hilbery from Night and Day. Clarissa's aunt Helena arrives, as does Clarissa's seamstress, the Prime Minister, and Sally Seton. Clarissa unifies them all under one single roof, for "She was a magician!" (MD, 291). In the midst of all this enchantment, death arrives. "Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death, she thought" (MD, 279). At last, the essential connection is made between life and death, and as Septimus' spirit joins the gathering, Clarissa begins to understand the significance of his offering.

Septimus' death cleanses Clarissa of the corruptive elements in her life, the distractions and weights of superficiality. Her gift of enlightenment is the vision of the woman in the window; now her own meaning is complete, for she has accepted the common treasures of daily life. Because Septimus succeeds in completing her, Clarissa is now able to leave the window and complete the others, touching, once again, every aspect of life. This time, however, she is not Mrs. Richard Dalloway; she is not a past lover of Peter Walsh; she is not the mother of Elizabeth, or the niece of Helena; she is simply Clarissa.

> 'I will come,' said Peter, but he sat on for a moment. What is this terror? what is this ecstasy? he thought to himself. What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement?
>
> It is Clarissa, he said.
>
> For there she was.
>
> (MD, 296)

Clarissa has become the emblem of unity and androgyny. She finally evokes the unifying symbol of the cross, mentioned in the first pages of the novel, "the symbol of something which has soared beyond seeking and questing and knocking of words together and has become all spirit" (MD, 42).

* * *

In 1923, Virginia Woolf translated a series of writings by Tolstoi. The following passage from "Talks with Tolstoi" addresses the knowledge of a common, unified humanity which Clarissa now possesses, for however briefly, and which Lily Briscoe, in Woolf's following novel, will also soon possess. In fact, the passage evokes the freedom and expanse that ensues when the complete androgynous vision is attained:

> True life exists where the living being is conscious of itself as an indivisible 'I', in whom all impressions, feelings, etc., become one ... True spiritual life is liberated when a man neither rejoices in his happiness, nor suffers from his own suffering, but suffers and rejoices with the worries and pleasures of others and is fused with them into a common life ...
>
> The spiritual is not always shown in us, but it is this that makes our true spiritual life, which is not subject to time ... there are times in my long life which are clearly preserved in my memory, and other times which have completely disappointed, they no longer exist. The moments which remain are most frequently the moments when the spirit in me awoke ... Spiritual life is a recollection ... It is our spirit, which shows itself more or less clearly, that contains the progress of man's temporary existence ... What the life in time is for, we do not know; it is only a transitory phenomenon.
>
> (Cited Hafley, 77)

CHAPTER TWO

"Granite and Rainbow"

To the Lighthouse

"Beautiful and bright it should be on the surface, feathery and evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colours on a buterfly's wing; but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron. It was to be a thing you could ruffle with your breath; and a thing you could not dislodge with a team of horses."

- To the Lighthouse

While writing her fifth novel, To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary, "I think this is the proof that I was on the right path; and that what fruit hangs in my soul is to be reached there" (AWD, 85). More revealing and truthful words could not have been written, for in To the Lighthouse, Woolf will uncover the androgynous vision and the constancy of "ordinary life" (TTL, 240) more penetratingly than ever. In her celebration of the continuity in "the little daily miracles" (TTL, 240), Woolf reveals the natural balance of life through her movement toward the redemptive, androgynous core, that is, through her unification of two opposing truths into one luminous reality. To the Lighthouse concerns itself with the dissolution of conflict, time, diverse action, and external symbols, into the birth of a clear and patterned insight, as will be expressed by the artist Lily Briscoe.

The novel is divided into three coherent sections. In "The Window", the action centres on an initial state of commotion and conflict, symbolized largely by the contrast between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. By exploring one consciousness and meditation after another, Woolf reveals the polarity between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay and their respective conceptions of truth: they will reveal the exclusive visions of masculinity and femininity. The artistic effort of Lily Briscoe remains the ordering force throughout the first and longest section of the novel. In "Time Passes", the passage of ten years will

test the two opposing visions of life. External decay sets in; Mrs. Ramsay dies; the garden becomes choked; Mr. Ramsay's books moulder. Nothing physical is permanent, but the two visions prevail, still attempting reconciliation. Symbolically, the painting, too, is incomplete. Finally, in "The Lighthouse", a permanent, healing shape is given to the flux between memory and reality. The two visions, the one of factual truth, the other of imagination, are at once united through Lily Briscoe's creation. In her final brush stroke, she ultimately expresses that which previously ceased to be expressed throughout the novel, the product of the marriage between illusion and reality, the feminine tenet with the masculine. Lily's painting will be the symbol of androgyny, ultimately combining the two principles of truth. The emblem of androgyny will be

> Beautiful and bright ... on the surface, feathery and evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colours on a butterfly's wing; but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron ... a thing you could ruffle with your breath; and a thing you could not dislodge with a team of horses. (TTL, 255)

In the final section, Lily will "connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left" (TTL, 83), the "evanescent" with the "bolts of iron", and thus perfect androgyny, "the razor edge of balance" (TTL, 287).

Woolf continues through this work to ask questions about personality, experience and time, and their interrelatedness. What is the relationship between the

individual and the experience? Is death a healer, or does it destroy all that has been established? Are we eternal? How does memory shape us and our understanding of others and the world? Does time enhance, or is it a limitation and a destroyer? To the Lighthouse sets out to answer each of these questions; the questions finally will be resolved through the consummate vision which ensures that in "the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing ... was struck into stability" (TTL, 241). What is inspired and preserved by Lily's painting is simply the moment, recollected, in its entirety. For, when all else expires, "the moments which remain are most frequently the moments when the spirit in me awoke ... Spiritual life is a recollection" (Cited Hafley, 77). Through recollection, Lily will experience her illumination:

> One wanted, she thought [after Mrs. Ramsay's death], dipping her brush deliberately, to be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy. The problem might be solved after all ...
>
> 'Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!' she cried, feeling the old horror come back ... And then, quietly, as if she refrained, that too became part of ordinary experience, was on a level with the chair, with the table. Mrs. Ramsay -- it was part of her perfect goodness -- sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro, knitted her reddish-brown stocking, cast her shadow on the step. There she sat. (TTL, 299-300)

The past will greet and therefore shape the present.

It will become Woolf's as well as Lily Briscoe's effort to find the "essential thing" (TTL, 76) within the

object and individual, so that, amidst the various incidents and impressions, beyond symbols which flit across the page and a lifetime, the truthful core, the androgynous spirit will stand poised and eternal.

> And, what was even more exciting, she felt, too, as she saw Mr. Ramsay bearing down and retreating, and Mrs. Ramsay sitting with James in the window and the cloud moving and the tree bending, how life, from being made up of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore one up with it and threw one down with it, there, with a dash on the beach.
>
> (TTL, 73)

Lily Briscoe will transcend sexual polarity, dispersion and the rendering chaos through the creative act. Denying neither realm or entity completely, she will find rich continuity in the coalescence of the two.

> All of this danced up and down, like a company of gnats, each separate, but all marvellously controlled in an invisible elastic net -- danced up and down in Lily's mind, in and about the branches of the pear tree ... until her thought which had spun quicker and quicker exploded of its own intensity; she felt released; a shot went off close at hand; and there came, flying from its fragments, frightened, effusive, tumultuous, a flock of starlings.
>
> (TTL, 40-41)

The flock, like Lily's mind and the world at large, is at once fragmented and singular. Lily becomes the "luminous halo", the "semi-transparent envelope" (TCR 1, 189), the "invisible elastic net" which encloses and orders life's dichotomy and turmoil, and inspires the clarity of "matches struck unexpectedly in the dark" (TTL, 240).

To the Lighthouse is critically considered autobiographical. Creating Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, more than with any other characters, helped Woolf to heal and reconcile the two conflicting strains within her. David Dowling emphasizes the closeness of Woolf's text to her own personal and artistic philosophy, as well as her intuitive sense of androgyny:

> Lily is, surely, a surrogate for the author ... the author had to unite with words what Lily is represented as unifying on canvas. Lily needs both the colours and the cohesive form; her creator needed to present variegated impressions with a rigid design. Moreover, Woolf had to express the multiform 'feminine' experience with words, those instruments of the 'masculine' order. She represented with the tools of her father, the vision of her mother. (Dowling, 148-149)

To the Lighthouse is a cathartic journey toward sexual reconciliation and artistic completion. The lighthouse, itself an ambiguous motif within the novel, may be regarded as a symbol of androgyny itself; the lighthouse, which is finally reached in the last pages of the novel, simultaneously with Lily's completion of her painting, merges both spheres into one towering and brilliant entity. The lighthouse blends the protective, ephemeral light of Mrs. Ramsay with the stark and solid power of Mr. Ramsay, light with dark, sea with land. Slowly, through the course of three sections, one artistically journeys from a state of sexual polarity "toward a recognition of androgyny" (Heilbrun's title) and a state of wholeness.

From its inception, the novel emphasizes the existing gulf between the two visions of reality. Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay's young son James has been awaiting a trip to the lighthouse. At the age of six, his father's will has already begun to shape his outlook:

> he belonged, even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from that, but must let future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand ... to such people even in earliest childhood any turn in the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallise and transfix the moment upon which its gloom or radiance rests ... he appeared the image of stark and uncompromising severity, with his high forehead and his fierce blue eyes ...
>
> (TTL, 9-10)

When asked whether or not they will be able to go to the lighthouse in the morning, the two opposed responses mark his parents' firmly set polarity. Mrs. Ramsay exclaims, "Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow ... But you'll have to be up with the lark" (TTL 9). Already Mrs. Ramsay is seen as a source of optimism and protection, as well as a believer in wonder. "'But it may be fine -- I expect it will be fine'" (TTL, 11). James for a moment is comforted by this poetic, maternal world which relies upon faith and the imagination. She provides "heavenly bliss ... fringed with joy" (TTL, 9). Mr. Ramsay, however, believing in uncompromising facts and accuracy, opposes the possibility of wonder, and promptly interjects, "But, ... it won't be fine" (TTL 10),

> standing, as now, lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one, grinning sarcastically, not only with

> the pleasure of disillusioning his son and casting ridicule upon his wife, who was ten thousand times better in every way than he was (James thought), but also with some secret conceit at his own accuracy of judgement. (TTL, 10)

When later Mrs. Ramsay refers to the continuous friction and animosity which exist amongst her eight children, one is apt to find that the source of their contention parallels their parents' broad contradiction.

> Strife, divisions, differences of opinion, prejudices twisted into the very fibre of being ... The real differences, she thought, standing by the drawing-room window, are enough, quite enough ... (TTL 17)

Mr. Ramsay is sharply aligned with all that is scientific and factually sound. In the Ramsay household, Mr. Ramsay, a portrait of Leslie Stephen, stands for unbending, unmerciful law. Lily Briscoe will later find him "petty, selfish, vain, egotistical; he is spoilt; he is a tyrant; he wears Mrs. Ramsay to death" (TTL 40). He has no consideration for the world of imagination or make-believe, but instead praises pure and concrete reality, accepting all of its unpleasantness.

> What he said was true. It was always true. He was incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all his own children... (TTL, 11-12)

In his mind, the truth should never be concealed as a means of softening the blows of life. Life is meant to

be vigorous and character-building. His children therefore "should be aware from childhood",

> that life is difficult; facts uncompromising; and the passage to that fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, our frail barks founder in darkness (here Mr. Ramsay would straighten his back and narrow his little blue eyes upon the horizon), one that needs, above all, courage, truth, and the power to endure. (TTL, 11)

This becomes Mr. Ramsay's creed, and he will expect those around him to adopt it with the same reverence that he does. Leslie Stephen is at once called to mind, being himself an advocate of the dictum: "dreams may be pleasanter for the moment than realities; but happiness must be won by adapting our lives to the realities" (Cited Bazin, 15). Mr. Ramsay esteems tangible reality, and revels in the disillusionment it causes. Mrs. Ramsay, on the other hand, is eager to create hope: she creates the possibility of a fine day, despite the fact that it is venturing toward a possible untruth. Similarly, when her daughter Cam is unable to sleep because of a skull which James hangs in their room, Mrs. Ramsay is quick to alter a"disagreeable" situation by creating fantasy.

> 'Well then,' said Mrs. Ramsay, 'we will cover it up,' and they all watched her go to the chest of drawers, and open the little drawers ... she quickly took her own shawl off and wound it round the skull, round and round and round, and then she came back to Cam and laid her head almost flat on the pillow beside Cam's and said how lovely it looked now; how the fairies would love it; it was like a bird's nest; it was a like beautiful mountain such as she had seen abroad, with valleys and flowers and bells ringing and birds singing and little goats and antelopes ... She could see the words echoing as she spoke them rhythmically in Cam's mind ... Mrs. Ramsay went on speaking still more monotonously, and

> more rhythmically and more nonsensically, how she must shut her eyes and go to sleep and dream of mountains and valleys and stars falling and parrots and antelopes and gardens, and everything lovely ... until she sat upright and saw that Cam was asleep. (TTL, 172-173)

Mr. Ramsay holds that his wife's imaginative distractions are untruths: "she flew in the face of facts, made his children hope what was utterly out of the question, in effect, told lies. He stamped his foot on the stone step. 'Damn you,' he said" (TTL, 50).

Mr. Ramsay, in addition to his unyielding loyalty to actualized truth, is also dictated by precision and exactitude. Without reservation, he brings to mind Quentin Bell's description of the Stephen men:

> Their minds are formed to receive facts and when once they have a fact so clearly stated that they can take it in their hands, turn it this way and that, and scrutinise it, they are content. (Bell i, 19)

In his adherence to precision, however, Mr. Ramsay, like Peter Walsh and William Rodney, loses sight completely of the personal, emotional truth, the daily illuminations:

> Indeed he seemed to her sometimes ...'born blind, deaf, and dumb, to the ordinary things, but to the extraordinary things, with an eye like an eagle's. His understanding often astonished her. But did he notice the flowers? No. Did he notice the view? No. Did he even notice his own daughter's beauty, or whether there was pudding on his plate or roast beef? ... And looking up, she saw above the thin trees the first pulse of the full-throbbing star, and wanted to make her husband look at it; for the sight gave her such keen pleasure. But she stopped herself. He never looked at things. (TTL, 107-108)

Mr. Ramsay bases the success of his mind and his worth as a human being upon his ability to reach the letter Z. He wishes to be a leader, a revered success whom everyone will remember and esteem. He must, then, persevere to the end, to the letter Z. The following passage reveals the unresilient mechanics of his mind:

> It was a spendid mind. For if thought is like the keyboard of a piano, divided into so many notes, or like the alphabet is ranged in twenty-six letters all in order, then his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one, firmly and accurately, until it had reached, say, the letter Q. He reached Q. Very few people in the whole of England ever reached Q. Here, stopping for one moment by the stone urn which held the geraniums, he saw, but now far, far away, like children picking up shells, divinely innocent and occupied with little trifles at their feet and somehow entirely defenceless against a doom which he perceived, his wife and son, together, in the window. They needed his protection; he gave it them. But after Q? What comes next? After Q there are a number of letters the last of which is scarcely visible to mortal eyes, but glimmers red in the distance. Z is only reached once by one man in a generation. Still, if he could reach R it would be something ... He braced himself. He clenched himself. (TTL, 53-54)

Obsessively goal- and success-oriented, and at all costs, the attainment of Z becomes of paramount importance to Mr. Ramsay. The protection of his son and wife is simply another assertion of his masculine ego; hé protects them out of duty and a desire to be needed, not out of love. His life, "narrow as the blade" (TTL, 10), revolves around calculations and introspection, around his "exactingness and egotism" (TTL, 58). His success is contingent upon "the magnificence of his head" (TTL, 58) and his victorious arrival at Z. "Mr. Ramsay squared his shoulders and stood very upright by the urn" (TTL, 56).

As earlier discussed with respect to Leslie Stephen, the masculine ego and worth is contingent upon the sympathy and bolstering which they demand from women. Mr. Ramsay is undoubtedly formed in the Stephen mould.

> There he stood, demanding sympathy.
>
> Mrs. Ramsay, who had been sitting loosely, folding her son in her arm, braced herself ... and into this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself, like a beak of brass, barren and bare. He wanted sympathy. He was a failure, he said. Mrs. Ramsay flashed her needles. Mr. Ramsay repeated, never taking his eyes from her face, that he was a failure. (TTL, 58-59)

His constant crying out for affirmation from women becomes a sharp intrusion into the privacy of their world. In his overbearing demands for comfort and for the confirmation of his excellence, he exhausts the generosity of his wife. He becomes childish and needy in his pursuit of assurance.

> It was sympathy he wanted, to be assured of his genius, first of all, and then to be taken within the circle of life, warmed and soothed, to have his senses restored to him, his barrenness made fertile, and all the rooms of the house made full of life ...
>
> Filled with her words, like a child who drops off satisfied, he said, at last, looking at her with humble gratitude, restored, renewed, that he would take a turn ... (TTL, 59-60)

It becomes the woman's role to provide his life source, unreservedly. She becomes mother, provider, protector, redeemer.

> Flashing her needles, confident, upright, she created drawing-room and kitchen, set them all aglow; bade him take his ease there, go in and out, enjoy himself ... James felt all her strength flaring up to be drunk and quenched by the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of the male, which smote mercilessly, again and again, demanding sympathy. (TTL, 59)

Mr. Ramsay ceases to exist without his wife's constant confirmation of his genius and his worth. "If he put implicit faith in her, nothing should hurt him" (TTL, 60). He becomes paralyzed and ineffective in his effort. Mrs. Ramsay will continue to give lavishly of herself, to the demanding, arid principle. Mrs. Ramsay, like Julia Stephen, like Helen Ambrose, will give away her innermost, creative, affirming core to the demands of her husband and society.

> So boasting of her capacity to surround and protect, there was scarcely a shell of herself left for her to know herself by; all was so lavished and spent; and James ... felt her rise in a rosy-flowered fruit tree laid with leaves and dancing boughs into which the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of his father, the egotistical man, plunged and smote, demanding sympathy. (TTL, 60)

Mr. Ramsay will turn to Lily Briscoe,after Mrs. Ramsay's death, for the same validation, calling to mind Leslie's dependence upon his daughter Stella after Julia's death. Lily, however, formed in a different mould from Mrs. Ramsay's, will not concede to the same lavishing. Lily quakes at the thought of nourishing a wounded ego that should in reality be nourishing itself.

> Instantly, with the force of some primeval gust (for really he could not restrain himself any longer),

> there issued from him such a groan that any other woman in the whole world would have done something, said something -- all except myself, thought Lily girding at herself bitterly, who am not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid, presumably.
>
> Mr. Ramsay sighed to the full. He waited. Was she not going to say anything? Did she not see what he wanted from her?... All Lily wished was that this enormous flood of grief, this insatiable hunger for sympathy, this demand that she should surrender herself up to him entirely ... should leave her, should be diverted ... before it swept her in its flow. (TTL, 226)

Lily, "not a woman", not a Mrs. Ramsay, finds it dishonest to fulfil his needs, it "was immensely to her discredit, sexually, to stand there dumb" (TTL, 228). In the end, both will triumph: Lily belittles his needs by exclaiming, "'What beautiful boots!'" and then,

> She was ashamed of herself. To praise his boots when he asked her to solace his soul; when he had shown her his bleeding hands, his lacerated heart, and asked her to pity them, then to say, cheerfully, 'Ah, but what beautiful boots you wear!' deserved, she knew, and she looked up expecting to get it, in one of his sudden roars of ill-temper, complete annihilation. (TTL, 229)

But Mr. Ramsay, instead, will be flattered by the compliment and attention. His self-worth is raised tenfold because Lily Briscoe approves of his boots. "Instead, Mr. Ramsay smiled. His pall, his draperies, his infirmities fell from him" (TTL, 229).

Mr. Ramsay will feel threatened and excluded by Mrs. Ramsay's moments of solitude and vision, for they conflict with her role as wife and comforter. Therefore, in retaliation, Mr. Ramsay will build up his own genius

and ego while deflating hers. His magnificence and genius is confirmed only through the belittling of hers.

> And he wondered what she was reading, and exaggerated her ignorance, her simplicity, for he liked to think that she was not clever, not book-learned at all. He wondered if she understood what she was reading. Probably not, he thought. She was astonishingly beautiful. (TTL, 182)

Charles Tansley, a guest at the Ramsays' house, and certainly made in the Stephen mould, will similarly feel threatened by the independence and outspokenness of some of the women at the dinner party. Once again, in reaction, he will deprecate their intelligence and their femininity.

> For he was not going to talk the sort of rot these people wanted him to talk. He was not going to be condescended to by these silly women. He had been reading in his room, and now he came down and it all seemed to him silly, superficial, flimsy. Why did they dress? He had come down in his ordinary clothes ... They made men say that sort of thing ... They did nothing but talk, talk, talk, eat, eat, eat. It was the women's fault. Women made civilisation impossible with all their 'charm', all their silliness. (TTL, 129)

So while such men as Tansley and Ramsay feél they must talk down to women for their silliness and superficiality, they similarly feel threatened by any sign of women's growing independence, need for solitude, and mental integrity. Women, it seems, should be seen and not heard; but then even that is not enough.

Mrs. Ramsay is one of Woolf's most complex female characters. At times, she resembles Mrs. Dalloway; however, Mrs. Dalloway is given the gift of freedom and selfhood, while Mrs. Ramsay's "treasure" is stolen from her. She is Virginia Woolf's evocative earth-mother; she is wholly maternal, fecund, dutiful, self-sacrificing, submissive. But she is also at times a unifier, she is intuitive, creative, healing. But Mrs. Ramsay's vision of life, significantly, will cease to be expressed. Trapped within her feminine boundaries, any yearnings for completion and deliverance that she may possess are severed by the "beak of brass" (TTL, 58). Ultimately, however, her aspiring vision will be completely and at once expressed by Lily Briscoe.

Herbert Marder radically errs when he asserts that "Mrs. Ramsay as wife, mother, hostess, is the androgynous artist in life, creating with the harmony of her being. Compared to the harmony she has created, both Mr. Ramsay's treatises and Lily Briscoe's painting seem paltry things" (Marder, 128). Marder overlooks the severity with which Mrs. Ramsay is confined by her role. She cannot be ultimately creative, for she fails to live from both sides of her being. Mrs. Ramsay is purely feminine. She <u>is</u> unifying, she <u>can</u> assert harmony; but she is still one-sided. Her ultimate magnificence will only be expressed through Lily Briscoe's rounded vision. Carolyn Heilbrun in <u>Toward a Recognition of Androgyny</u> agrees that

> It is only in groping our way through the clouds of sentiment and misplaced biographical information that we are able to discover Mrs. Ramsay, far from androgynous and complete, to be as one-sided and life-denying as her husband. (Heilbrun, 155)

Mrs. Ramsay is described by Hermione Lee as being "beautiful, queenly, short-sighted, philanthropic and inventive. Her intimacy with her children nourishes her tendency towards fantasy and exaggeration. She is associated with poetry, Mr. Ramsay with prose" (Lee, 118). Mrs. Ramsay <u>is</u> an ordering force in the novel. As she knits or entertains, she creates an intricate pattern out of the unconnected fragments surrounding her: the sounds of people talking, the children playing, Charles Tansley's books scattering overhead, Mr. Ramsay's "phrase-making" (TTL, 104); she delicately builds a frame in which she will weave a design. Mrs. Ramsay's creativity, however, is lacking and at times broken, for it is ridden with duties and obligations; it ceases to be pure and accomplished, for it remains rooted to the domestic. Lily recalls that Mrs. Ramsay had

> brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that miserable silliness and spite (she and Charles squabbling, sparring, had been silly and spiteful) something-- this scene on the beach, for example, this moment of friendship and liking ...almost like a work of art. (TTL, 239-240)

Mrs. Ramsay at times resembles the artist, but her "work of art" is never finalised or expressed because of her ultimate imprisonment and single-mindedness. Her many moments of illumination and harmony would, if it were not for Lily Briscoe, be forgotten like a painting tucked

away in an attic to collect dust. Lily Briscoe frees and makes Mrs. Ramsay permanent, for Lily is the artist. In her passionate reverence for the maternal and her role as wife and comforter, Mrs. Ramsay will fail to actualize her larger and freer potential. She is locked into the feminine state of mind, despite her intuitive yearning for something more collective.

> But some of these states of mind seem, even if adopted spontaneously, to be less comfortable than others. In order to keep oneself continuing in them one is unconsciously holding something back, and gradually the repression becomes an effort.
> (AROOO, 146-147)

Mrs. Ramsay will unconsciously repress her yearning and ability for a greater art.

Mrs. Ramsay denies her own fulfilling impulses in attempting to fertilize the more sterile world around her, particularly the world of men. Submitting to the patriarchal sphere, she allows her inherent solitary self to be possessed by others, primarily by her husband. Eventually, her entire conscious existence will rely upon her benevolence toward and relationship to men. Her duties and ability to be needed alone provide her with self worth: "she did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband; ... of the two he was infinitely the more important, and what she gave the world, in comparison with what he gave, negligible" (TTL, 61-62). In her whole-hearted celebration of marriage and motherhood, Mrs. Ramsay finds very little room or energy left for personal creativity. She exalts the position of

men and therefore continues, at all cost, to put their claims before her own virtue.

> Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance; finally for an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential; which an old woman could take from a young man without loss of dignity, and woe betide the girl -- pray Heaven it was none of her daughters! -- who did not feel the worth of it, and all that it implied, to the marrow of her bones!
> (TTL, 13)

Mrs. Ramsay's femininity becomes fatal, for, instead of combining it with the masculine sphere, she remains absolute in her effort to provide.

Mrs. Ramsay's commitment to duty and responsibility becomes her primary sense of purpose, the scale upon which she measures her success and goodness as a person. This becomes her method of ordering, controlling, combining: "at fifty, she thought, possibly she might have managed things better -- her husband; money; his books. But for her own part she would never for a single second regret her decision, evade difficulties, or slur over duties" (TTL, 14). After the dinner party, her children suggest an evening's walk to the beach. Having just put the younger children to sleep and softened her husband's influence, Mrs. Ramsay thrills at the idea of becoming young again, without burdens, without a forced identity.

> Instantly, for no reason at all, Mrs. Ramsay became like a girl of twenty, full of gaiety. A mood of revelry suddenly took possession of her. Of course they must go; of course they must go, she cried, laughing; and running down the last three or four steps quickly, she began turning from one to the other and laughing and drawing Minta's wrap round her and saying she only wished she could come too ...
>
> 'How I wish I could come with you!' she cried. But she was withheld by something so strong that she never even thought of asking herself what it was. (TTL, 175-176)

Mrs. Ramsay's commitment is assumed, utterly unquestioned:

> Of course it was impossible for her to go with them. But she would have liked to go, had it not been for the other thing, and ... she went with a smile on her lips into the other room, where her huband sat reading. (TTL, 176)

But as she goes in to greet her husband, she becomes aware of "the absurdity of her thought" (TTL, 176). Mrs. Ramsay becomes aware that "she wanted something more" (TTL, 176), something larger, perhaps, more fulfilling:

> Of course ... she had come here to get something she wanted... But she wanted something more, though she did not know, could not think what it was she wanted. She looked at her husband ... and saw that he did not want to be interrupted -- that was clear. He was reading something that moved him very much. He was half smiling and then she knew he was controlling his emotion. (TTL, 176)
>
> And dismissing all this, as one passes in diving now a weed, now a straw, now a bubble, she felt again, sinking deeper, as she had felt in the hall when the others were talking. There is something I want -- something I have come to get, and she fell deeper and deeper without knowing quite what it was, with her eyes closed.
>
> (TTL, 178)

It is during moments like this one that Mrs. Ramsay begins to resemble the solitary, visionary artist; but, unlike Mrs. Dalloway and certainly unlike Lily Briscoe, she will be unable to express this developing, expansive identity.

Mark Hussey in The Singing of the Real World expresses Mrs. Ramsay's dilemma succinctly:

> Her solitude is broken into by the effort of combining, leaving her depleted and dejected, uncertain of her own being. Aware of this, she must still create, combine, and offer, making matches because she sees potential in the union of two people for something whole and lasting ...
>
> Marriage still is an unsatisfactory compromise in which one person -- invariably the woman -- must sacrifice her own wishes to serve her partner's shortcomings ... she wishes upon herself his draining demands...For anyone to see that he needed her would upset Mrs. Ramsay's idea of how the world is ... (Hussey, 51)

When Charles Tansley agrees with Mr. Ramsay that the trip to the lighthouse will most certainly be cancelled, Mrs. Ramsay feels a great deal of contempt and anger toward him. "Yes, he did say disagreeable things ... it was odious of him to rub this in, and make James still more disappointed" (TTL, 12). And yet, Mrs. Ramsay, familiar only with the consoling and cushioning of men, is unable to express her justifiable scorn. Instead, she will pity him: "she would not let them laugh at him ... she could not bear incivility to her guests, to young men in particular ..." (TTL, 12-13). Instead of honestly expressing her anger, Mrs. Ramsay uses her femininity and role as healer to soothe and raise Tansley's ego.

> [Mr. Carmichael] should have been a great philosopher, said Mrs. Ramsay ...
>
> It flattered him; snubbed as he had been, it soothed him that Mrs. Ramsay should tell him this. Charles Tansley revived. Insinuating, too, as she did the greatness of man's intellect, even in its decay, the subjection of all wives ... she made him feel better pleased with himself than he had done yet, and he would have liked, had they taken a cab, for example, to have paid for it. As for her little bag, might he not carry that? ... He would like her to see him, gowned and hooded, walking in a procession. A fellowship, a professorship, he felt capable of anything ...
>
> (TTL, 19-20)

Mrs. Ramsay continues to provide the pity and praise necessary to fill his head and ego with dignity. She again distorts the truth for the sake of peace: " still he went on talking, about settlements, and teaching, and working men, and helping our own class, and lectures, till she gathered that he had got back entire self-confidence ... " (TTL, 22- 23). "He took her bag ... for the first time in his life Charles Tansley felt an extraordinary pride ... he was walking with a beautiful woman. He had hold of her bag" (TTL, 25). Once again, Mrs. Ramsay, while forfeiting her own identity and needs, fills the voids and shortcomings within men, and provides them with false senses of pride, security and respect.

When Mrs. Ramsay is finally alone and serene, she cultivates her more inventive and private self. Out of the chaos of dispersed identity, Mrs. Ramsay collects herself into one precise shape. She becomes the "wedge-shaped core of darkness" (TTL, 95). Each of us, Woolf believes, is composed of light and dark, the light

associated with analysis, daytime with the external; the dark side of our psyche is associated mysteries, it eludes analysis, escapes from society. The dark side is concerned with "emotion which meanders darkly and obscurely through the hidden channels of the soul" (Lakshmir, 32). There are "two faces to every situation; one in the light so that it can be described as accurately as possible; the other half in shadow so that it can be described only in a moment of faith and vision..." (Bazin, 22). When Mrs. Ramsay becomes the "core of darkness" (TTL, 95), she is her own evocative, single self.

> For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of -- to think; well, not even think. To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others.
>
> (TTL, 95)

She moves closer to acknowledging her missing elements, the knowledge that "she wanted something more" (TTL, 176). She begins to knit again, to weave a patterned fabric that at the same time collects her into a single entity. "Although she continued to knit, and sat upright, it was thus that she felt herself; and this self having shed its attachments was free for the strangest adventures" (TTL, 95-96). Upon Mrs. Ramsay have been placed layers of artificial identities, those which are seen in light, in other words, those which are seen by the outer world. But when she is singular, she

is enigmatic; the layers fall away and she is at once linked only with her instinct, with darkness and her true self. She now touches all of life.

> When life sank down for a moment, the range of experience seemed limitless. And to everybody there was always this sense of unlimited resources, she supposed; one after another, she, Lily, Augustus Carmichael, must feel, our apparitions, the things you know us by, are simply childish. Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep; but now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by. Her horizon seemed to her limitless ... This core of darkness could go anywhere, for no one saw it. (TTL, 96)

The core escapes barriers and preconditions, for, one "could not stop it, she thought, exulting. There was freedom, there was peace, there was, most welcome of all, a summoning together, a resting on a platform of stability" (TTL, 96).

Interestingly, however, Mrs. Ramsay's darkened moments of illusion and "summoning together" will not last. In darkness, one is revealed to the self; but Mrs. Ramsay will continue to be aware of the light, that is, the side that shows itself in public, the side that is concerned with roles and position. Continuously she will be interrupted by the light, weakening the "wedge-shaped core of darkness":

> Often she found herself sitting and looking, sitting and looking, with her work in her hands until she became the thing she looked at -- that light, for example. And it would lift up on it some little phrase or other which had been lying in her mind like that -- 'Children don't forget, children don't forget'. (TTL, 97)

Light remains a disruption, a reminder that the external world of responsibilities, outside the darkened core, remains:

> Always, Mrs. Ramsay felt, one helped oneself out of solitude reluctantly by laying hold of some little odd or end, some sound, some sight. She listened, but is was all very still; cricket was over; the children were in their baths; there was only the sound of the sea. She stopped knitting; she held the long reddish-brown stocking dangling in her hands a moment. She saw the light again.
> (TTL, 99)

In darkness, Mrs. Ramsay is able to move beyond physical limitations, clock-time and domestic confinements. She will continue to be drawn to the light, however, which is, in its exclusiveness, barrenly reminiscent of "the fret, the hurry, the stir" (TTL, 96) of the external world. Only when the light is combined with the solidity of the tower, to create the symbol of the lighthouse, will both images become unifying. Then she will rise to meet "that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, which was her stroke ..." (TTL, 96).

Her husband, witnessing her moments of peace as she stares out to sea, does not encourage her singleness. He has to force himself not to interrupt her: "It saddened him, and her remoteness pained him, and he felt, as he passed, that he could not protect her, and, when he reached the hedge, he was sad ... He must stand by and watch her" (TTL, 98-99). And instead of sinking further and further into the freedom of darkness, Mrs. Ramsay

"looked at the steady light, the pitiless, the remorseless, which was so much her, yet so little her" (TTL, 99), and goes to meet her husband who stands forlorn nearby. She gives him "of her own free will what she knew he would never ask, and call[s] to him and [taking] the green shawl off the picture frame, and [goes] to him. For he wished, she knew, to protect her" (TTL, 100).

Despite her momentary affinity with darkness and her intrinsic core, Mrs. Ramsay continues to speak loudly and consciously as a woman. Lily Briscoe, the heroine of the novel, however, will be one of Woolf's most exquisite examples of the androgynous artist, the reason for which such critics as Carolyn Heilbrun will consider To the Lighthouse "Mrs. Woolf's best novel of androgyny" (Heilbrun, 156). When Lily Briscoe claims "I have had my vision" (TTL, 310) so too has Virginia Woolf, and the novel ends. The supreme collaboration between the two halves of the mind takes place within Lily Briscoe because she is "woman-manly" (AROOO, 156). She recognises both sexes within the mind, both principles within the universe, and therefore can acknowledge the consummate spirit of renewal. Woolf acknowledges this same artistic consonance when she creates Lily. In this balanced state these two women become the most refined and consummate of artists; the one completes a rounded novel, the other completes a painting.

Lily Briscoe is introduced into the novel as one who stands apart from the rest: she is solitary, aloof, and has "Chinese eyes" (TTL, 29). Her eyes suggest that she is strikingly different from others, she is foreign, unconventional. "With her little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face, she would never marry; one could not take her painting very seriously; she was an independent little creature, and Mrs. Ramsay liked her for it ..." (TTL, 29). Lily is ultimately the independent miracle who offers peace, not only within the novel, but within her creator as well.

Throughout the novel, Lily will attempt to reconcile fleeting illusion with concrete reality. In other words, she attempts to reconcile inspiration with the final product, her illusory image of Mrs. Ramsay with Mrs. Ramsay herself. The "moment's flight between the picture [her viewing of Mrs. Ramsay] and her canvas" (TTL, 32) is the struggle between illusion and actuality, the struggle to assign a single, solid shape to the aura of Mrs. Ramsay. "Then beneath the colour there was the shape. She could see it all so clearly, so commandingly, when she looked: it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole thing changed" (TTL, 32). How to capture her vision, composed, on the canvas; how to reconcile imagery with fact, the evanescent with the bolts of iron, memory with reality. This venture toward reconciliation becomes not only the purpose of Lily's painting, but the purpose of their journey to the lighthouse, as well as the purpose of the novel itself.

At the novel's end, when Lily has painted her last stroke and Woolf has put down her pen, the eternal harmony between transient inspiration and the solid product, illusion and reality, memory and the present, is at once recollected. The moment is captured and made eternal.

At the start of the novel, Lily has not yet solidified a purpose, but instead rather aimlessly dabbles in her paint. Lily will struggle to consummate and capture reality, as opposed to the apparent or the overly-literal. Lily still has this sense of purposelessness and meaninglessness when she returns to the Ramsay's years later. "How aimless it was, how chaotic, how unreal it was" (TTL, 219). She fails to resolve the disparity between the memory of her friend Mrs. Ramsay and her very concrete reality.

> "It was bad, it was bad, it was infinitely bad! She could have done it differently of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealised ... But then she did not see it like that. She saw the colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral.
>
> (TTL, 75)

Only when she is able to combine the remembrance of Mrs. Ramsay with the reality of Mr. Ramsay landing at the lighthouse, consciousness with solid time, the feminine with the masculine, the steel with the arches of the cathedral, will she be able to express the inexpressible. Finally, Mrs. Ramsay will take on the shape of the triangle, again evoking the wedge-shaped core. Mrs. Ramsay will not be purely representative of elusive

memory, nor will she purely represent concrete reality, but rather a blending of the two: Mrs. Ramsay will take on the shape of the shadow which she cast upon the step while seated in the window, the shape of the triangle, "the shape of the dome" (TTL, 80).

William Bankes and Lily Briscoe both stand apart as androgynous, independent artists, possessing a "common hilarity, excited by the moving waves ... with a natural instinct to complete the picture" (TTL, 34). Lily allows only Mr. Bankes to oversee her work, for they are in fact, comrades in their search for continuity, "allies" (TTL, 30). Significantly, "she did not, as she would have done had it been Mr. Tansley, Paul Rayley, Minta Doyle, or practically anybody else, turn her canvas upon the grass, but let it stand. William Bankes stood beside her" (TTL, 30). Both artists are disdainful of sex roles and the tradition of marriage. "Bankes was childless and a widower" (TTL, 35) and Lily "would never marry" (TTL, 29). In the evenings, without fail, they commune and stroll together, far away from the distractions of the Ramsays. "They came there regularly every evening drawn by some need" (TTL, 33), the need to understand and therefore to harmonize both realms. William Bankes understands the need to embrace both scientific precision as well as the evanescent:

> the sight of her reading a fairy tale to her boy had upon him precisely the same effect as the solution of a scientific problem, so that he rested in contemplation of it, and felt, as he felt when he had proved something absolute about the digestive

> system of plants, that barbarity was tamed, the reign of chaos subdued. (TTL, 74)

Unlike Mr. Ramsay, he will not be confined, but rather liberated, by scientific knowledge. He does not know exclusiveness, but "was rather unusual ... he never let himself get into a groove" (TTL, 133).

Unlike Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, whose identities rest entirely upon one another, Lily is single. She will move beyond convention, particularly beyond marriage: "gathering a desperate courage she would urge her own exemption from the universal law; plead for it; she liked to be alone; she liked to be herself; she was not made for that" (TTL, 77). Despite the passion and strength with which Lily is drawn to Mrs. Ramsay, there is similarly a lack of understanding. "Mrs. Ramsay cared not a fig for her painting" (TTL, 77). Mrs. Ramsay knows and exists in terms of being a woman, while Lily knows in terms of being an artist, experiencing both the masculine and feminine realm. Lily senses Mrs. Ramsay's lack of awareness of certain realms of experience, particularly one's desire to marry. For Mrs. Ramsay, marriage is the culmination of life; for Lily, marriage can be the dispersion of life:

> she had laid her head on Mrs. Ramsay's lap and laughed and laughed and laughed, laughed almost hysterically at the thought of Mrs. Ramsay presiding with immutable calm over destinies which she completely failed to understand. There she sat, simple, serious.
>
> (TTL, 78)

Lily adores Mrs. Ramsay, but she refuses to worship her the way William Bankes does. Treating her friendship as she does her art, Lily wants to capture Mrs. Ramsay's most elusive but truthful essence. "How did she differ? What was the spirit in her, the essential thing ..." (TTL, 76). Mrs. Ramsay, however, will overlook Lily's "essential thing" by insisting that she must marry. Lily resents Mrs. Ramsay's feminine conventions, her need to control, her desire to matchmake: "She was wilful; she was commanding (of course, Lily reminded herself, I am thinking of her relations with women, and I am much younger ...)" (TTL, 76). Mrs. Ramsay insists that Lily in some way is deficient because she does not want to marry, while Lily asserts that "she liked to be alone; she liked to be herself" (TTL, 77). Marriage would steal away her treasures. Lily will attempt to reconcile their disparity while maintaining their independence through her art. She will attempt to understand the most deep-rooted ideas, "stored up in Mrs. Ramsay's heart ... sealed as they were" (TTL, 79):

> What art was there, known to love or cunning, by which one pressed through into those secret chambers? What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one adored? Could the body achieve, or the mind, subtly mingling in the intricate passages of the brain? or the heart? Could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs. Ramsay one? for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought, leaning her head on Mrs. Ramsay's knee. (TTL, 79)

During Mrs. Ramsay's dinner party, Lily watches Mrs. Ramsay's identity fragment into numerous, meaningless splinters: "the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her ... if she did not do it nobody would ..." (TTL, 126). "Lily Briscoe watched her drifting into that strange no-man's land ... as one follows a fading ship until the sails have sunk beneath the horizon" (TTL, 127). She watches Mrs. Ramsay ladle out the soup, pity Mr. Bankes, temper Mr. Tansley. With relief, Lily remembers her painting, her ability to rectify, to heal, perhaps to transcend this scattering turmoil:

> She remembered, all of a sudden as if she had found a treasure, that she had her work. In a flash she saw her picture, and thought, Yes, I shall put the tree further in the middle; then I shall avoid that awkward space. That's what I shall do. That's what has been puzzling me. She took up the salt cellar and put it down again ... as to remind herself to move the tree. (TTL, 128)

The dinner party is an embodiment of life's discord and despair. Each member conflicts with another; the dinner party revolves around Mrs. Ramsay's sense of the inadequacy of human relationships, the "strife, divisions, difference of opinions" (TTL, 17). Friction prevails: Mr. Ramsay, "screwing his face up ...scowling and frowning, and flushing with anger" (TTL, 143); Mr. Tansley, relishing the topic of politics, leadership, science; Mrs. Ramsay "bored by this talk" (TTL, 143); Lily Briscoe fantasizing about her painting. It becomes Mrs. Ramsay's duty to assert composure. Amidst the

disunity, Lily will once again find repose in her recollection of her painting.

> Human relations were all like that, she thought, and the worst (if it had not been for Mr. Bankes) were between men and women. Inevitably these were extremely insincere she thought. Then her eye caught the salt cellar, which she had placed there to remind her, and she remembered the next morning she would move the tree further towards the middle, and her spirits rose so high at the thought of painting tomorrow that she laughed out loud at what Mr. Tansley was saying. Let him talk all night if he liked it. (TTL, 139-140)

The tree becomes the symbol of androgyny, a symbol which will reappear in Orlando. The tree centres the left and right, image and reality, Mrs. Ramsay with Mr. Ramsay.

> For at any rate, she said to herself, catching sight of the salt cellar on the pattern, she need not marry, thank Heaven: she need not undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution. She would move the tree rather more to the middle. (TTL, 140)

Lily returns to the Ramsay's home ten years later, aged forty, after the death of Mrs. Ramsay. Amidst the disintegration and superficial change, "loveliness reigned and stillness, and together made the shape of loveliness itself, a form from which life had parted ..." (TTL, 195). "Only the Lighthouse beam entered the room for a moment, sent its sudden stare over the bed and wall in the darkness of winter, looked with equanimity..." (TTL, 207-208). Lily's attempts to make sense of her memory, and Mr. Ramsay's and the children's expedition to the lighthouse coincide. Unlike during the first section, Lily will be able to compose because she is

separate, undistracted. Previously, she had been too emotional, too "feathery and evanescent", thus unproductive. Now she is singular, able to poise emotion with hardened reality.

> She had no attachment here, she felt, no relations with it, anything might happen, and whatever did happen, a step outside, a voice calling ... was a question, as if the link that usually bound things together had been cut ... How aimless it was, how chaotic, how unreal it was, she thought ...
> (TTL, 218-219)

The link must remain, but it must not be overly present. Lily will overcome the aimlessness by recalling Mrs. Ramsay through revelation; but simultaneously, she will attain clarity and precision by staying slightly removed. Lily will connect the colour of the butterfly's wing with the hardness of steel, to bring into existence the shape of the cathedral dome.

Lily attempts to bring into one single shape, both her solitude, signifying the present, and Mrs. Ramsay's death, signifying memory.

> And he shook his head at her, and strode on ('Alone' she heard him say, 'Perished' she heard him say) and like everything else this strange morning the words became symbols, wrote themselves all over the grey-green walls. If only she could put them together, she felt, write them out in some sentence, then she would have got at the truth of things.
> (TTL, 219)

Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay become symbols in need of unification: Mrs. Ramsay is "Perished", Mr. Ramsay "Alone". Therefore, while Lily reconciles her solitude,

the link cut ("Alone"), with her memory of Mrs. Ramsay ("Perished"), she is more importantly reconciling the two larger opposing structures, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. Symbolically, Mr. Ramsay, the "phrase-maker", as he lands at the lighthouse and experiences his own revelation with the memory of his wife, repeats the line "We perished, each alone" (TTL, 308). He carries out Lily's desire to put the two principles into "some sentence"; at last at peace with a larger humanity, Mr. Ramsay "got at the truth of things" (TTL, 219). His completion of the sentence will coincide with Lily's completion of her painting.

Mr. Ramsay and Lily will have to remain separate in order for their revelations to occur.

> The question was of some relation between those masses. She had borne it in her mind all these years. It seemed to her as if the solution had come to her: she knew now what she wanted to do.
>
> But with Mr. Ramsay bearing down on her, she could do nothing ... She could not paint. (TTL, 221)

She must be alone, without the interruption which "would break the frail shape" (TTL, 220). "She set her clean canvas ... to ward off Mr. Ramsay and his exactingness" (TTL, 223). Lily is able to make the first brush stroke only when she is alone with the memory of Mrs. Ramsay. "A brush stroke, the one dependable thing in a world of strife, ruin, chaos" (TTL, 43). The stroke will combine the past with the present, making neither one overly present.

Lily can paint only when she is able to call Mrs. Ramsay to mind, but with the composure of a poised artist. She realises that art is not a philosophy, but rather a capturing of the moment, "life itself".

> The great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one ... herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs. Ramsay bringing them together. Mrs. Ramsay saying, 'Life stand still here'; Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent) -- this was the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing ... was struck into stability. Life stand still here, Mrs. Ramsay said. 'Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!' she repeated. She owed it all to her. (TTL, 240-241)

"Life itself" is the spirit which combines memory with reality, patiently moulding the globe. "She went on trundling her way into her picture, into the past" (TTL, 298).

> then, beauty would roll itself up; the space would fill; those empty flourishes would form into shape; if they shouted loud enough Mrs. Ramsay would return. 'Mrs. Ramsay!' she said aloud, 'Mrs. Ramsay!' The tears ran down her face.
>
> (TTL, 268)

Both Lily and Mr. Ramsay attempt to capture and render eternal the <u>essence</u> of Mrs. Ramsay. Ironically, they will be each other's inspiration because "some common feeling held the whole" (TTL, 286). Memory must be actualized by reality: Lily's inspiration depends upon Mr. Ramsay physically making communion with Mrs. Ramsay's spirit by landing at the lighthouse.

> 'He must have reached it', said Lily Briscoe aloud, feeling suddenly completely tired out. For the Lighthouse had become almost invisible, had melted away into blue haze, and the effort of looking at it and the effort of thinking of him landing there, which both seemed to be one and the same effort, had stretched her body and mind to the utmost. Ah, but she was relieved. Whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last.
>
> 'He has landed,' she said aloud. 'It is finished.'
> (TTL, 308-309)

The circle has been completed.

> There it was -- her picture ... With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision.
> (TTL, 309-310)

The lighthouse will of course join the two visions into an emblem of androgyny. The state of androgyny is reached, as symbolized by James' final vision of the lighthouse, a vision which combines both his mother's and his father's image of life:

> The Lighthouse was then a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye, that opened suddenly, and softly in the evening. Now --
>
> James looked at the Lighthouse. He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it?
>
> No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other Lighthouse was true too.
> (TTL, 276-277)

The affirmation that "nothing was simply one thing" is perhaps one of Woolf's greatest statements of androgyny. The elusive "shadow" (O, 201) within each being is not one-sided, but rather, is many-tiered, both male and female, both "stark and straight" as well as "silvery, misty-looking...with a yellow eye". The essential moment, the luminous core which transcends polarity is all-embracing, for it is androgynous. Virginia Woolf's next "novel", Orlando: A Biography (1928), will similarly embrace the essential twofold knowledge by ceasing to be "simply one thing". Orlando will voice eloquently the doctrine that "everything was partly something else" (O, 202).

CHAPTER THREE

"The Captain Self"

Orlando

"There was something strange in the shadow that the flicker of her eyes cast, something which (as anyone can test for himself by looking now at the sky) is always absent from the present -- whence its terror, its nondescript character -- something one trembles to pin through the body with a name and call beauty, for it has no body, is a shadow without substance or quality of its own, yet has the power to change whatever it adds itself to. This shadow...attaching itself to the innumerable sights...composed them into something tolerable, comprehensible...Yes...I can begin to live again...I am about to understand."

- Orlando

Through the course of four centuries, Orlando journeys toward, and preserves, the full knowledge of androgyny, through a transcendence above distinction and time, ultimately symbolized by the flight of the wild goose. Though Virginia Woolf herself considered Orlando to be "a very quick brilliant book" (AWD, 136), "half laughing, half serious" (AWD, 120), the crux of her unceasing celebration of the composite sex is confirmed in this offering to her friend, Vita Sackville-West. "I never got down to my depths and made shapes square up, as I did in the Lighthouse" (AWD, 136), and yet, the fruit of the marriage of opposites rests in the centre of Orlando.

Orlando traces the hero/heroine's movement beyond "shredding" time, beyond the limitations of sex, and beyond the scrutiny of society. Because the "novel" is a fantasy, Orlando is Woolf's first protagonist to sustain fully her understanding and experience of androgyny. Orlando, quite literally, lives as both a man and as a woman, eventually combining the two experiences into one profound comprehension. Neither time nor the constraints of society intrude upon Orlando's collected, androgynous self, unlike that of her prefigurements, Clarissa and Lily. When Orlando finally blends her experiences as a man and a woman, she ultimately becomes free and creative; significantly, her freedom is not momentary, like the "match burning in a crocus" (MD, 47), but rather, will be enduring and eternal: "for she was now

one and entire, and presented, it may be, a larger surface to the shock of time" (O, 200). What has previously been known as a mystical, fleeting recognition of androgyny, is now actualized through fantasy.

Orlando, among other things, is a mock history, parodying the pedantic, methodological biographies, and those works of art which are composed exclusively from the masculine side of the brain. It is important to acknowledge that, despite the intricate strains of seriousness, Orlando was written as a comedy, as a relief from Woolf's previous precise and exhausting undertakings. It was to be "truthful but fantastic" (AWD, 114).

> For the truth is I feel the need of an escapade after these serious poetic experimental books whose form is always so closely considered. I want to kick up my heels and be off...I think this will be great fun to write; and it will rest my head before starting the very serious, mystical poetical work which I want to come next. (AWD, 105)

Underneath the comedy and the sharp social comment lies the significant biography and celebration of Vita Sackville-West. It is often surmised that Virginia Woolf and Vita (a candid Sapphist) shared a Lesbian attraction for one another (Bell ii, 116-117), at once suggesting their potential androgynous natures. In Woolf's eyes, Vita was the elegant poetess who successfully balanced feminine graces with masculine potency and control. While on the one hand, Vita was an aristocratic blue-

blood, able -- in Virginia Woolf's words -- "to take the floor in any company, to represent her country, to visit Chatsworth, to control silver, servants, chow dogs", she was also able to dedicate herself to "motherhood...in short...a real woman...there is some voluptuousness about her; the grapes are ripe" (Cited Bell ii, 118). Orlando is "Virginia's most idealised creation...modeled near to the heart's desire" (Bell ii, 118). So, in Orlando, while Woolf did indeed "kick up [her] heels", she also paid homage , not only to one of her most treasured inspirations, but also to her ardent belief in the ideal, composite entity. Above all, however, "the balance between truth and fantasy must be careful" (AWD, 117).

The "novel" itself is androgynous in that it successfully merges the structured, erudite sphere of biography with the imaginative, lackadaisical ("kick up my heels") feminine sphere of fantasy. Just as Orlando ceases to be "simply one thing", so too the "novel" itself ceases to be single-tiered. Orlando is not simply a fantasy, or simply a biography; it ceases to be simply comical, simply allegorical or simply poetic. Instead, Orlando is an all-embracing creation, "not one and simple, but complex and many" (TW, 76). Like the single red carnation which symbolizes the union formed by the seven characters in The Waves, Orlando is a "single flower...a seven-sided flower, many-petaled...a whole flower to which every eye brings its own contribution" (TW, 127). Successfully fusing the two entities of rigid biography and elusive fantasy, Woolf gives shape and

pattern to the flux of time, making "something tolerable, comprehensible" (O, 201).

The recurring Woolfian metaphor for the opposing life forces, "granite and rainbow", appears again in Orlando, in terms of "the aim of biography" (G & R, 149). For the art of biography, Woolf advocates a knowledge of androgyny: tempering absolute truth with imagination, she believes biographers on the whole have failed, hence her parody, Orlando.

> On the one hand there is truth; on the other there is personality. And if we think of truth as something of granite-like solidity and of personality as something of rainbow-like intangibility and reflect that the aim of biography is to weld these two into a seamless whole, we shall admit that the problem is a stiff one and that ... biographers for the most part have failed to solve it. (G & R, 149)

The biographer is unsuccessful when he fails to

> choose those truths which transmit personality. For in order that the light of personlity may shine through, facts must be manipulated; some must be brightened; others shaded; yet, in the process, they must never lose their integrity. (G & R, 149-150)

In other words, the work of art must avoid being "simply one thing"; it must possess both the feminine "brightened" personality and the masculine respect for truth. It must merge the personal with the impersonal. He who manages to compose from such a unified perspective, succeeds in understanding "the aim of biography". "He chooses; he synthesizes; in short, he

has ceased to be the chronicler; he has become an artist" (G & R, 153). "Such is that queer amalgamation of dream and reality, that perpetual marriage of granite and rainbow" (G & R, 155).

The symbol of the rainbow is of particular significance to androgyny in that it is traditionally the symbol of unification and healing. In the Bible the Lord announces, "I have set my rainbow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth" (Gen. 9:12-7). As Lily Briscoe stands before her canvas at the novel's end, she has finally harmonized, if only momentarily, life's greater opposition. As she symbolically draws a line of balance through the centre of her canvas, she looks above her and sees a suggestion of peace: "she had seen [Mr. Carmichael] let fall from his great height a wreath of violets and asphodels which, fluttering slowly, lay at length upon the earth" (TTL, 309). In her calm and solitude, her artistic vision is one of consummation and the single mystery. The single mystery prefigures the artist Orlando who, out of life's oppositions, will attain a composite identity. Orlando will be the covenant itself, the reconciler who, in D. H. Lawrence's terms, has "one foot in the lap of a woman/ and one in the loins of a man", and allows the two forces to "touch in mid-heaven" and "make a rainbow" ("Rainbow", Complete Poems, 818-820).

The tree is another image which serves as a symbol of androgyny and the ultimate selfhood which is born of

reconciliation. The tree as a symbol of the unified and creative self makes one of its first appearances in The Voyage Out. During a dance at the hotel, Rachel is asked to play the piano. The guests complain, however, that they cannot dance to the music she plays. Beginning to assert this new independent self, Rachel encourages them to create their own dance. Conventions immediately break down. Women dance with women, men with men. "Instantly a gigantic circle was formed, the dancers holding hands" (TVO, 166). Rachel has asserted harmony. The next morning, she leaves for a solitary walk. "Her ears hummed with the tunes she had played the night before" (TVO, 173). She notices a tree, a tree which comes to symbolize her composite self, solidly rooted, all the while branching and bending:

> It was an ordinary tree, but to her it appeared so strange that it might have been the only tree in the world. Dark was the trunk in the middle, and the branches sprang here and there, leaving jagged intervals of light between them as distinctly as if it had but that second risen from the ground. Having seen a sight that would last her for a lifetime, and for a lifetime would preserve that second, the tree once more sank into the ordinary ranks of trees, and she was able to seat herself in its shade ...' (TVO, 174)

Momentarily, Rachel is singular and complete.

The tree similarly is at once massed and branching, singular and multiple. On the one hand, the trunk suggests towering stability and permanence; on the other hand, the tree evokes the pattern of many branches, shooting out in numerous directions, diverse,

searching, vacillating. The branches symbolize the numerous striving selves and disparate identities within each being. But the trunk, which keeps the tree rooted and upright, also suggests the force which amalgamates all the disparate parts into one unifying whole. It is toward this ultimate unified centre that Orlando gravitates during the course of the novel, just as Lily Briscoe gravitates artistically toward the stability and freedom of the lighthouse. Ultimately, both symbols house the artists' most truthful selves, the "shadow" of their being.

> He sighed profoundly, and flung himself ... on the earth at the foot of the oak tree. He loved, beneath all this summer transiency, to feel the earth's spine beneath him; for such he took the hard root of the oak tree to be; or, for image followed image, it was the back of a great horse that he was riding; or the deck of a tumbling ship -- it was anything indeed, so long as it was hard, for he felt the need of something which he could attach his floating heart to; the heart that tugged at his side; the heart that seemed filled with spiced and amorous gales every evening about this time when he walked out. To the oak tree he tied it and as he lay there, gradually the flutter in and about him stilled itself ...(O, 12-13)

The tree serves as a solid "spine" as well as a spur for his imagination.

Throughout his travels, Orlando will continue to return to the hilltop upon which the oak tree stands. The oak tree represents Orlando's rounded identity, for it houses the "Key self" (O, 194), the source and product of harmony. This most congruous self is "the conscious self, which is the uppermost, and ... wishes to be nothing

but oneself. This is what some people call the true self ... compact of all the selves" (O, 193-194). Significantly, Orlando will entitle his poem, which it takes four centuries to complete, "The Oak Tree". The development of the poem traces the development of Orlando, and his progression toward the "Key self". When the poem is complete, Orlando himself is complete. As Woolf herself asserts: "it is this writing that gives me my proportions". "Odd how the creative power at once brings the whole universe to order" (AWD, 164,220). Orlando's poetry is similarly an ordering and stabilizing force, much like the oak tree itself. Before Orlando is able to come to a full realisation of this composed self, also known as "the Captain self" (O,194), he must first experience the complexities of "life in general": the richness of both sexes as well as the numerous disparate identities within the universe. Once secured, Orlando will stand whole and entire; he will become the provider, like the oak tree, of ultimate freedom, and creative life.

Orlando first appears entrenched in the aristocratic, traditional setting; he is surrounded by the conventions of nobility and patriarchy. Any creative yearning that Orlando attempts to cultivate is diverted from the start for the demands of society will keep him squarely in position and out of contact with his more liberating, perhaps more feminine instincts: "there could be no doubt about his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it -- " (O,9). It is once again

Woolf's contention that the established masculine condition is full of health and clarity only when it is receptive to the influence of the feminine condition, so that the two may cooperate peacefully. "There must be freedom and there must be peace" (AROOO, 157). Woolf emphasizes that the "creative power ... is in the gift only of the opposite sex to bestow" (AROOO, 130).

In creating Orlando, Woolf reconfirms the ardent belief that a considerable common denominator exists between man and woman; essentially, ultimately, no difference with regard to human value or worth exists. The polarity exists only because society insists upon establishing and maintaining an uncrossable divide. Orlando's sex change is merely a physical manifestation of the potential for androgyneity which innately exists within every being, for "in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been" (O, 87). By interacting in two separate worlds, all the while remaining intact in her own centre, Orlando proves the common humanity inherent in both realms. Furthermore, in possession of this prized knowledge, Orlando realises the "Captain self" (O, 194), which transcends opposition and bears the collected self, life, truth and common humanity.

In the opening page of the novel the protagonist is surrounded by the exclusive masculine sphere of nobility, which is rooted to the tradition of patriarchy.

> He ... was in the act of slicing at the head of a Moor which swung from the rafters ... Orlando's

> father, or perhaps his grandfather, had struck it from the shoulders of a vast Pagan ... and now it swung, gently, perpetually, in the breeze which never ceased blowing through the attic rooms of the gigantic house of the lord who had slain him.
>
> Orlando's fathers had ridden in fields of asphodel, and ... had struck many heads of many colours off many shoulders, and brought them back to hang from the rafters. So too would Orlando, he vowed. (O, 9)

These opening lines of Orlando suggest the established power and violence of nobility, the constancy of tradition, and the exclusive and exploitive nature of the aristocratic male line. A customary code of behaviour and diplomacy exists, by which Orlando must abide, simply because it is a part of his ancestry, as a scion of nobility. Orlando will follow the steps of those men before him, carry the same sword, uphold the same long-established standards and prejudices. "From deed to deed, from glory to glory, from office to office he must go, his scribe following after ... Orlando, to look at, was cut out precisely for some such career." (O, 10). Not only is Orlando's entrapment foreshadowed, but also the awareness of his instinctive desire for a more expansive, creative, singular life; the seeds of Orlando's quest for the autonomous self have been set in soil. "'Tell me', he wanted to say, 'everything in the whole world' for he had the wildest, most absurd, most extravagant ideas about poets and poetry" (O, 14). The knowledge Orlando attains, through the course of four centuries, will allow for his ultimate vision of totality, for his androgynous vision will be the outcome of his past experience.

The Great Frost which covers the world in one of the early sections of the novel, serves to address effectively the repression and sterility which result from an exclusive, unbending male lineage.

> Birds froze in mid-air and fell like stones to the ground ... Corpses froze and could not be drawn from the sheets. It was no uncommon sight to come upon a whole herd of swine frozen immovable upon the road. ... The severity of the frost was so extraordinary that a kind of petrification sometimes ensued ...
>
> (O, 21-22)

Similarly, Orlando's potential for a wider vision becomes frozen and unyielding, as he becomes entrenched deeper in court and society life. Orlando begins to envision only death, for he sees nothing life-affirming or rejuvenating ahead of him. Orlando "would fling himself face downwards on the ice and look into the frozen waters and think of death" (O, 29), while the inspired "old poet" for whom Orlando holds the greatest respect, "sees ogres, satyrs, perhaps the depths of the sea instead" (O, 14). Despite the lure of the poet and the expansive life he embodies, Orlando remains intrigued and distracted by the less liberating court life:

> So Orlando stood gazing while the man [the poet] turned his pen in his fingers, this way and that; and gazed and mused; and then, very quickly wrote half-a-dozen lines and looked up. Whereupon Orlando, overcome ... darted off and reached the banqueting-hall only just in time to sink upon his knees and, hanging his head in confusion, to offer a bowl of rose water to the great Queen herself.
>
> (O, 14)

While the great poet is inspired and complete, Orlando remains trapped by propriety, becoming increasingly one-sided. Orlando is led astray by fame, ambition, vanity and pretension, a set of distractions which take him further away from fruition and leave him suspended and uninspired.

Disillusioned by both love and the world of poetry and art, Orlando escapes to the oak tree before his change of sex. Upon the hilltop, Orlando vows never again to write for anyone but himself, "one of the most remarkable oaths of his lifetime" (O, 64). Previously writing for society and to acquire "immortal lustre upon his name" (O, 50-51), Orlando claims: "I'll write from this day forward to please myself" (O, 64). With this solemn oath, Orlando begins to disregard the significance of society and fame, moving closer to an earthly knowledge of the self. This oath of expanse prefigures the dual knowledge about to be bestowed upon him.

Shortly after this revelation, Orlando is sent to Constantinople to become the Ambassador to Turkey. He enters a seven-day trance, and, in the midst of pomp and heraldry, awakens to find he has become a woman. Her previous knowledge of the masculine world is fused with her feminine insight to bring her closer to her ultimate vision of solidarity. James Hafley asserts that Orlando, by becoming a woman, "adds intuitive to intellectual knowledge, and the gradual development of that intuitive faculty leads her to her final perception of reality"

(Hafley, 103). Orlando becomes at once "complex and many" (TW, 70), all the while remaining singular. By blending intellect with instinct, past with present, Orlando will fully experience androgyny. Significantly, it is the figure of "Truth" who ceremoniously blasts the trumpet to awaken and announce Orlando as a woman, suggesting the clarity and honesty of her new identity. Certainly, the "normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating" (AROOO, 147). Within Orlando, both the masculine and feminine spirits will cooperate. Orlando does not become a woman to the exclusion of her manhood, but rather blends and shapes the knowledge of the two. "His form combined in one the strength of a man and a woman's grace" (O, 86). "Orlando had become a woman -- there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been" (O, 86-87). Woolf demonstrates that the disparity between man and woman, the masculine and the feminine conventions, is but superficial; the antagonism and repression that prevail stem almost purely from establishment's insistence upon alienating one sphere from the other by asserting stereotyped judgements.

The change of sex which still allows Orlando to remain, in every other way, "precisely as he had been" emphasizes not only the ability for opposites to unite and to form a productive centre, but also the falsity and danger of gender stereotypes. By moving toward the "feminine" sphere, Orlando and the novel itself are able

to transcend impersonal facts and analyses; Orlando is able to move beyond expectation, beyond stereotypes, beyond the codes of society. Therefore, Orlando will eventually greet a far more expansive humanity, making contact with her more abundant self. Hafley, in his admirable study of Woolf, often refers to the philosopher Henri Bergson. The following passage from Bergson illuminates the psychological growth born out of Orlando's dual nature:

> Intuition and intellect represent two opposite directions of the work of consciousness: intuition goes in the very direction of life, intellect goes in the inverse direction, and thus finds itself naturally in accordance with the movement of matter. A complete and perfect humanity would be that in which these two forms of conscious activity should attain their full development. (Cited Hafley, 98-99)

Woolf similarly succeeds in emphasizing the belief that intuition and intellect are co-dependent; they are born of one another and, together, in unison and balance, comprise the very shape of "life itself", "now solidly compact and domed like the Cathedral of Saint Sofia at Constantinople" (AROOO, 107).

It is important to acknowledge that Orlando does not suddenly reach selfhood and entirety the minute she becomes a woman. Just as she had to experience her days and encounters as a man, so too she must function actively, perceptively as a woman, thus gaining the consummate revelation from her understanding of both spheres. As Hafley adroitly concludes,

> Orlando can be at once the manly woman and womanly man -- she can achieve a balance of intellect and intuition possible only in a fantasy; thus, before her complete perception of reality, she has become a 'real woman', so that her final realization of herself transcends the fantastic. (Hafley, 104)

Orlando then rises and begins her life as a woman, mystically advantaged for having the knowledge of manhood.

Orlando continues to question, and struggle through, the various tribulations associated with being female in a traditional society, all the while searching for completion and liberation. Immediately after becoming a woman, Orlando leaves the ceremonious life of Constantinople and joins a tribe of gypsies. One senses, from the onset of her stay there, the freedom from repressive diplomacy and protocol, and the flight above polarity and the insistence that Orlando, and life, is "simply one thing":

> her soul expanded with her eyeballs, and she prayed that she might share the majesty of the hills, know the serenity of the plains ... Then, looking down, the red hyacinth, the purple iris wrought her to cry out in ecstasy at the goodness, the beauty of nature. (O, 90)

Orlando is beginning to celebrate nature and the "spirit we live by" rather than superficialities and fame. With this broader knowledge, "she beheld the eagle soaring, and imagined its raptures and made them her own" (O, 172). The soaring eagle prefigures the flight of the wild goose at the end of the book. Orlando, with her

increasingly dual reality, is bound toward the sky, toward artistic and spiritual liberation, less imprisoned by society or sexual rigidities, free now to acknowledge and relish her entirety.

Before Orlando acknowledges the "true self", the amalgam of all the various selves and perspectives, she experiences a variety of disparate selves: "attachments elsewhere, sympathetic, little constitutions and rights of their own" (O, 192- 193). One self is interested in nature, another, again, in fame; one self is drawn to the superficial and entertaining, another only to solitude and creation.

> Greedy, luxurious, vicious? Am I? (here a new self came in) ... Truthful? I think so. Generous? Oh, but that don't count (here a new self came in).
> (O, 194)

Her visions cloud over as well as expand with each new phase, strengthening as she veers closer to the "true self ... compact of all the selves we have it in us to be" (O, 194). She realises "the penalties and the privileges of her position" (O, 96), and adjusts her manner and dress accordingly. As she questions, she learns some of the most valuable lessons: "Which is the greater ecstasy? The man's or the woman's? And are they not perhaps the same?" (O, 97). Gradually Orlando's perspective broadens through her practical knowledge and mystical conclusions about the sexes. She recognises the meaninglessness of labels and distinctions:

> And here it would seem from some ambiguity in her terms that she was censuring both sexes equally, as if she belonged to neither; and indeed, for the time being, she seemed to vacillate; she was a man; she was a woman; she knew the secrets, shared the weaknesses of each. (O, 99).

Orlando will nurture the feminine spirit as a means of tempering the exclusiveness and force of the masculine structure:

> better to leave the rule and discipline of the world to others; better be quit of martial ambition, the love of power, and all the other manly desires if so one can more fully enjoy the most exalted raptures known to the humane spirit, which are ... contemplation, solitude, love. (O, 100)

By exclaiming, "'Praise God that I'm a woman!'" (O, 100), Orlando tempers one-sidedness and therefore advocates a common, free humanity, "the humane spirit".

Gradually Orlando begins to focus on those forces which will direct her to the knowledge of her composite self. Her desire to write becomes more powerful than ever, the process itself becoming more and more smooth as her knowledge becomes more defined. Orlando, by learning to celebrate the androgynous "humane spirit", learns the relatedness of all people and the meaninglessness of titles and roles. When she reaches for her pen to resume writing her poem, she tries to transcend the "consciousness of sex" (O, 111); she strives to write, not simply as a woman or a man, but rather as a self, a pure artist, "woman-manly, man-womanly". She continues to assert, "'I am growing up ... I am losing my

illusions, perhaps to acquire new ones'" (O, 109), and with this belief she moves toward her creative centre, acknowledging "the progress of her own self along her own past" (O, 109). It is significant that Orlando recognises at this stage that "the ear is the antechamber to the soul ... the poet's, then, is the highest office of all ... " (O, 108), for the "Captain self", the "conscious self", is also "uppermost" (O, 193), the consummate "highest office of all".

For entertainment, Orlando changes her sex superficially, dressing like a man and then like a woman to observe the subsequent biassed treatment. She begins to recognise the danger of sexual distinction: regardless of her inner identity, immediate external barriers develop when she interacts with the opposite sex; conversely, a powerful comaraderie exists between members of the same sex.

> [Orlando] reaped a twofold harvest by this device; the pleasures of life were increased and its experiences multiplied. For the probity of breeches she exchanged the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the love of both sexes equally. (O, 138)

She realises that the threshold of selfhood lies in a breakdown of sexual distinction and societal entrapments. Woolf's own voice becomes distinct:

> The difference between the sexes is, happily, one of great profundity. Clothes are but a symbol of something hid deep beneath ... Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male

> or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above ...
>
> Whether, then, Orlando was most man or woman, it is difficult to say and cannot be decided.
>
> (O, 117-118)

What is essential is one's core identity, for it is that which is most truthful; the external conventions are simply a distortion. In the nineteenth century, Orlando picks up her worn and stained copy of "The Oak Tree" and reminisces through the ages: "how very little she had changed after all these years ... 'After all ... nothing has changed'" (O, 148). Through the flux of time, through various incidents and perspectives, Orlando has transcended distinction and become more powerful than "the shock of time" (O, 200).

Becoming increasingly more familiar with her larger sense of self, Orlando begins to feel the desire for a marriage partner. She finds a complement to her singularity in another androgynous character, Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine. Instead of the prevailing opposition and tension between the sexes, Orlando and Shelmerdine meet in harmony and welcome. Immediately they recognise one another's completeness and androgyneity:

> 'You're a woman, Shel!' she cried.
>
> 'You're a man, Orlando!' he cried.
>
> (O, 157)

Their ultimate harmony is possible because neither one allows for exclusive sexual identities or preconceptions. They meet as humans, as complete entities of truth rather than "simply one thing"; therefore gender is of no concern to them, but, rather, complete understanding.

> 'Are you positive you aren't a man?' he would ask anxiously, and she would echo,
>
> 'Can it be possible you're not a woman?' and ... each was so surprised at the quickness of the other's sympathy, and it was to each such a revelation that a woman could be as tolerant and free-spoken as a man, and a man as strange and subtle as a woman ...
>
> And so they would go on talking or rather, understanding, which has become the main art of speech ... (O, 161)

They are able to be solitary in their union, thus separate but in need of one another's fulfillment.

> So they would talk; and then ... Orlando would rise and stroll away into the heart of the woods in solitude ...
>
> After some hours ... she called 'Shelmerdine' and the word went shooting this way and that way through the woods and struck him where he sat ... as Orlando dropped now into the grass beside him. (O, 161-162)

Orlando and Shelmerdine meet as two separate entities, only to form another singular whole. Much to her happiness, Orlando finds that she can be married and still write as elegantly and creatively as before. Shelmerdine does not take away from her creative impetus but rather contributes to it by complementing her identity.

In the last section of the novel, Orlando makes a communion once again with the oak tree. At once, she will be relieved of all her disparate identities, and brought into totality. In an epiphanic moment, just before climbing to the hilltop, Orlando calls out for herself, "'Orlando?'", quite literally calling forth her integrated self which still elusively hovers about her and the countryside. "Come, come! I'm sick to death of this particular self. I want another ... Orlando? still the Orlando she needs may not come" (O, 192). Moving closer to the shade of the oak tree, her numerous selves are called together into one integrated self:

> For she had a great variety of selves to call upon ... all were different and she may have called upon any one of them ...
>
> there was a new one at every corner -- as happens when, for some unaccountable reason, the conscious self, which is the uppermost, and has the power to desire, wishes to be nothing but one self. This is what some people call the true self, and it is, they say, compact of all the selves we have it in us to be; commanded and locked up by the Captain self, the Key self, which amalgamates and controls them all. (O, 193-94)

It is only when Orlando stops searching and calculating that the revelation comes to her. The following passage calls to mind Clarissa Dalloway's and Mrs. Ramsay's moments of darkness and collection:

> The whole of her darkened and settled, as when some foil whose addition makes the round and solidity of a surface is added to it, and the shallow becomes deep and the near distant; and all is contained as water is contained by the sides of a well. So she was now darkened, stilled, and become, with the addition of this Orlando, what is called, rightly or wrongly, a single self, a real self. And she fell

> silent. For ... when communication is established [the selves] fall silent. (O, 196)

Now, as Orlando drives toward the sanctuary of oaks, it is "as if her mind had become a fluid that flowed round things and enclosed them completely" (O, 196). Water, a Woolfian symbol for resolution, healing and peace, appears once again as Orlando sits beside the Serpentine, basking in the freedom of her illumination. She at last holds in the palm of her hand her elusive centre, the knowledge of life, truth and beauty. It has taken shape out of chaos and disparity, out of various identities, out of the spectrum of experiences and ages, and formed, quite miraculously,

> something one trembles to pin through the body with a name and call beauty, for it has no body, is as a shadow without substance or quality of its own, yet has the power to change whatever it adds itself to. This shadow now, while she flickered her eye in her faintness in the carpenter's shop, stole out, and attaching itself to the innumerable sights she had been receiving, composed them into something tolerable, comprehensible. Her mind began to toss like the sea. Yes, she thought, heaving a deep sigh of relief ... I can begin to live again. I can begin to live again. I am by the Serpentine, she thought, the little boat is climbing through the white arch of a thousand deaths. I am about to understand .... (O, 201)

This "shadow" is the elusive composed self which Orlando (and Rachel, Clarissa and Lily before her) attempts to balance in her palm. This shadow is as evanescent and transparent as a butterfly or the colours reflected in the sky; but, simultaneously, the shadow is as immutable and eternal as a star. Orlando has had her revelation, the "match burning in a crocus". The "inner meaning",

the meaning of freedom and androgyny, has been unveiled. Now there is shape, now the pattern has been revealed:

> For the shadow of faintness ... had deepened now ... into a pool where things dwell in darkness so deep that what they are we scarcely know. She now looked down into this pool or sea in which everything is reflected ... and immediately ... everything was partly something else ... things came nearer, and further, and mingled and separated and made the strangest alliances and combinations in an incessant chequer of light and shade. (O, 201-202)

The spirit of androgyny reigns: light and dark blend to create shade, while men and women blend to create simply humanity, simply "life itself", void of all distinctions.

Previously Orlando had looked into the sea and seen only blackness and clouds of ice; now she experiences a clear and expansive vision. She understands the relatedness of all things, and life's intrinsic unity. Just as the "old poet" had seen "the depths of the sea" (O, 140), now too Orlando looks down into the pool and sees life rather than death.

This vision by the Serpentine leads Orlando to the oak tree which "had grown bigger and sturdier but was still in the prime of life" (O, 202). The tree continues to be her source of strength, her communion, and her poem continues to be her creed. Beneath the oak tree, at one with her new "Key self", Orlando realises the truth of poetry, and hence the truth of art and life.

> What has praise and fame to do with poetry? ... Was not writing poetry a secret transaction, a voice

> answering a voice? ... What could have been more secret, she thought, more slow, and like the intercourse of lovers, than the stammering answer she had made all these years to the old crooning song of the woods, and the farms and the brown horses standing at the gate, neck to neck, and the smithy and the kitchen and the fields, so laboriously bearing wheat, turnips, grass, and the garden blowing irises and fritillaries?
>
> (O, 203)

Peace and unity now crown the "secret of life". The "secret of perpetual life", the elusive shadow, is collected by the "daily miracles", by the simplicity of "the stammering answer ... made all these years to the ... song of the woods". The collected self is found not through fame or exclusiveness, or through the upholding of tradition and history, but rather, through the ecstasy of the moment, the "pure spark", the "spark of light burning on some glass-house" (O, 203). Orlando stands beside the oak tree and looks out at the expansive view. She sees Woolfian visions of resolution: "a grey domed manor house in a park; a spark of light ... a farmyard ... the gleam of a river ... the wild tides that swirl about the Hebrides" (O, 203). Chaos and opposition have ceased; Orlando knows only calm and fulfillment.

> She listened for the sound of gun-firing out at sea. No -- only the wind blew. There was no war today.
>
> (O, 203)

The vision of the spanning arch, the smooth "dome" under which disparate energies coalesce, continues to illuminate the knowledge of reconciliation through the last pages of Orlando. Woolf conjures up images of the arch (the shape of the rainbow, the covenant), the

shape of the mountains in the distance, the tip of a wave, and the light that shines from these shapes, as Orlando herself now arches over and spans the knowledge of light and artistic truth:

> Here the landscape (it must have been some trick of the fading light) shook itself, heaped itself, let all this encumbrance of houses, castles, and woods slide off its tent-shaped sides. The bare mountains of Turkey were before her ... She looked straight at the baked hill-side ... An eagle soared above her. (O, 203-204)

A mist covers the "tent-like landscape" (O, 204) and blurs the detail, making each object "partly something else":

> the light was fading, gentlier than before, calling into view nothing detailed, nothing small, but only misty fields, cottages with lamps in them ... a fan-shaped light pushing the darkness before it along some lane ... It was not necessary to faint now in order to look deep into the darkness where things shape themselves ... (O, 204)

Orlando now becomes the "wedge-shaped core of darkness", blending the past with the present, the actual with the visionary.

> There was her husband's brig, rising to the top of the wave! ... The white arch of a thousand deaths rose before it ... But the brig was through the arch and out on the other side; it was safe at last!
>
> 'Ecstasy!' she cried, 'ecstasy!' And then the wind sank, the waters grew calm; and she saw the waves rippling peacefully in the moonlight.
>
> 'Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine!' she cried, standing by the oak tree. (O, 204)

Orlando, resting in darkness, has confronted conflict, disparity and chaos, and now reaches out to the luminous span of order and consummation.

She calls to her husband and the "beautiful glittering name fell out of the sky like a steel-blue feather" (O, 204). Bonthrop, like Orlando, will embody, in his one being, the "feathery and evanescent" spirit with the "bolts of iron", "rainbow-like intangibility" with "granite-like solidity" (G & R, 149). Together, Orlando and Shelmerdine are "beautiful and bright" but unable to be "dislodged[d] with a team of horses" (TTL, 299). Orlando stands beside her husband and at once sees the final symbol of her consummate self, transcendent, emancipated, and at peace: " 'It is the goose!' Orlando cried. 'The wild goose ... ' " (O, 205). The goose symbolizes freedom, solitude, and transcendence. In previous moments of revelation during Orlando's journey, she had seen wild birds take flight, and had yearned to follow them "to the rim of the world" (O, 155). "'What's life, we ask, leaning on the farmyard gate; Life, Life, Life! cries the bird'" (O, 169). Now Orlando sees the wild goose and knows that it directs her toward the mystery of perpetual, androgynous life. She will follow the goose to the colour and ecstasy that hovers above them. The clock strikes midnight: day and night meet, as do man and woman, darkness and light, past and present. In darkness there is light, as in chaos there is unity: Orlando is poised between the two, for Orlando crowns the glory of androgyny. Androgyny, as a unifying force in the world at large, will be explored in Woolf's next two novels, The Waves and The Years.

CHAPTER FOUR

"The Interlude"

The Waves and The Years

"She felt as if she were standing on the edge of a precipice with her hair blown back; she was about to grasp something that just evaded her...We know nothing, even about ourselves. We're only just beginning, she thought, to understand, here and there. She hollowed her hands in her lap...until [the globe] shone, whole, bright, deep with understanding."

- The Years

The Waves is one of Woolf's most complex novels, capable of being considered in various perspectives. However, the rhythm of the wave is perhaps the one constant that imposes a coherent order upon the novel itself. While composing The Waves, Woolf wrote:

> The Waves is I think resolving itself ... into a series of dramatic soliloquies. The thing is to keep them running homogeneously in and out, in the rhythm of the waves. (AWD, 159)

Significantly, a wave is both singular and many; each individual wave, as with each individual being and individual "shadow", is composed of a twofold flux. The wave both ebbs and flows, rises and crashes, integrates and disintegrates; its shape is constructed by both the crest and the fall. The wave then is the symbol of consummation, the symbol of the androgynous spirit. As with the novel, and with the individual, "there is a gradual coming together, running into one, acceleration and unification" (TW, 294). In the midst of the expanse and perhaps storminess of the sea, the waves will collect eternally, spreading rhythm and constancy about the earth. The wave, at once, is eternal and ephemeral, endlessly dark and yet a reflection of light, both powerful and fluid.

The novel concerns itself with the internal soliloquies of six people, and their developing consciousness of the external world. The six fragmented identities combine to form one all-embracing entity, an

entity which will function both instinctively and intellectually: the "red carnation ... a single ... seven-sided flower" (TW, 127), in other words, the expansive "essential oil of truth" (AROOO, 41). The entity will be complete, composed of both the ebb and flow of life. Woolf speaks in favour of the eternal meshing of the single, private soliloquies within every being. The six characters' individual identities will flow in and out of one another, and in so doing will capture and reveal the "moment's bright spark" (TW, 202), the "essential oil".

> What is meant by 'reality'? ... it seems to dwell in shapes too far away for us to discern what their nature is. But whatever it touches, it fixes and makes permanent. (AROOO, 165-166)

It is Woolf's aim, in explaining the consciousness of six individual characters, to express, in the richest and most evocative form, "life itself", the essential life, which blends the actual world with one's visionary consciousness, so that it becomes difficult to "discern what [its] nature is". "Real life" (AWD, 144), then, ceases to be "simply one thing"; it is a shadow, a spark. Such is the nature of The Waves.

The following diary entry outlines Woolf's artistic aim of capturing this elusive "reality". "Reality", or the "moment", is born out of the balance between the external world and the more mystical, fluid consciousness; in other words, it captures the spark between the solid object and the fluctuating conception, as depicted in the soliloquies:

> I think it will begin like this: dawn; the shells on a beach; I don't know -- voices of cock and nightingale; and then all the children at a long table -- lessons. The beginning. Well, all sorts of characters are to be there. Then the person who is at the table can call out anyone of them at any moment; and build up by that person the mood, tell a story ... and so on: this shall be childhood ... The sense of children; unreality; things oddly proportional ... The unreal world must be round all this -- the phantom waves ... there must be great freedom ... Yet everything must have relevance.
>
> Well all this is of course the 'real' life; and nothingness only comes in the absence of this.
> (AWD, 144)

"Real life" is attained through the blending and overlapping of disparate consciousnesses, in order to create an intricate life pattern, "the swelling and splendid moment" (TW, 14).

When Woolf envisioned The Waves, she envisioned a creation that would reflect the harmony of androgyny, balancing matter with impression, the tangible world with fleeting awareness. She wished to move in the direction of freedom. "Away from facts; free; yet concentrated; prose yet poetry; a novel and a play" (AWD, 104). The Waves ceases to be "simply one thing", for it is an amalgam of all the components of life, yet all the while centred and entire. Though originally conceiving it as a "mystical poetical work" (AWD, 105), Woolf manages to incorporate the "bolts", the precision necessary for completion. While each soliloquy, identity and symbol flows in and out of another, casting an opaque veil over the novel at large, the work simultaneously rests within a solid, if not rigid, frame. Though the symbols and identities blend, they remain distinct and brilliant.

The moment one imagines a tiger leaping, Rhoda, with her layers of insecurities, fears and hatreds, becomes lucid within the mind of the reader. Similarly, the image of a wild beast thumping recalls only Louis, and the components of life which he evokes; a handkerchief screwed tightly into a ball recalls only Susan, from childhood through to old age. A distinct and continuous "rod of light" endures, amidst the "eternal flux" (TW, 249) and haze. Woolf, therefore, manages to escape pure facts and prose, as well as to avoid pure mysticism and poetry; instead, she rests within both the freedom of solidness and the freedom of the wave, within "the eternal renewal, the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again" (TW, 197).

Significantly, the novel opens at dawn, the moment at which night and day, darkness and light, become indistinguishable. "Life itself" is just beginning and, through the fabric of numerous soliloquies and interludes, will take shape and reflect the cohesive pattern.

> The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it. (TW, 7)

Night and day blend, and greyness and mist reign; the elusive core or "shadow", which "one trembles to pin through the body with a name and call beauty" (O, 21), hovers above the earth. Gradually, each consciousness

will begin to rise and, with that, distinction, opposition and fragmentation ensue:

> Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, perpetually. (TW, 7)

The six characters begin their movement toward a recognition of their innate personality, a single identity within a world of disunity.

Each individual possesses a remarkably distinct sensibility, which will combine with the others to create the composite entity; each contribution is necessary to the whole:

> 'Motor-cars, vans, omnibuses pass and repass continuously. All are merged in one turning wheel of single sound. All separate sounds -- wheels, bells, the cries of drunkards, of merrymakers -- all churned into one sound, steel blue, circular.' (TW, 135)

All will merge to create consummate "real life", the "daily miracles". When Bernard asserts that "one life that I look back upon; I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am -- Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis: or how to distinguish my life from theirs" (TW, 276), he speaks for each member of the circle, as well as for the constitution of androgyny. "For this is not one life; nor do I always know if I am man or woman, Bernard or Neville, Louis, Susan, Jinny or Rhoda --" (TW, 281). Their distinct

identities, individual "islands of light" (AWD, 143), will merge and make of life, and the moment, something that "has roundness, weight, depth, is completed" (TW, 238): for, above all, they are both single "islands of light" as well as "islands in the stream that I am trying to convey; life itself going on" (AWD, 143).

In their distinctness, the six characters represent six opposed conceptions of the world. Jinny represents the fluid and the sensual. She lives through instinct, through the ecstasy of the body. "Our bodies communicate. This is my calling. This is my world" (TW, 101). She flows, she is wholly languid, she is an arching dancer: "I flutter, I ripple" (TW, 102); "when I move my head I ripple all down my narrow body; even my thin legs ripple like a stalk in the wind" (TW, 42). Jinny's opposite is Neville, who lives from the intellect, is precise, and a lover of the Classics:

> 'Those are laboratories perhaps; and that a library, where I shall explore the exactitude of the Latin language, and step firmly upon the well-laid sentences, and pronounce the explicit, the sonorous hexameters of Virgil; of Lucretius ...' (TW, 31-32)

Susan is the earth-mother, living in celebration of the seasons, nature and fecundity:

> 'For soon in the hot mid-day ... my lover will come. He will stand under the cedar tree ... I shall have children ... a kitchen where they bring the ailing lambs to warm in baskets ... I shall be like my mother ...' (TW, 98-99)

Bernard is the maker of phrases . He struggles to make the story whole, but remains too distracted, incomplete, fragmented. He fails as an artist because he fears solitude and relishes fame.

> 'I, who am always distracted ... I have filled innumerable notebooks with phrases to be used when I have found the true story, the one to which all these phrases refer. But I have never yet found that story.' (TW, 187)

Rhoda is frail and solitary. She exists in a state of fear and hatred. To surmount her daily agony, she lives through the imagination. As a child, she rocked petals in a basin of water; she wishes to float out of this world and into a secure fantasy world:

> 'The door opens; the tiger leaps ... terror rushes in; terror upon terror, pursuing me. Let me visit furtively the treasures I have laid apart. Pools lie on the other side of the world reflecting marble columns. The swallow dips her wing in dark pools.' (TW, 105)

Finally, Rhoda's opposite is Louis, who lives to assert order; he is weak, "prim, suspicious, lifting his feet like a crane" (TW, 244). His roots go deep into the earth, securing him, like the chained beast, to the world of facts:

> 'I shall assemble a few words and forge round us a hammered ring of beaten steel.
>
> This is life; Mr. Prentice at four; Mr. Eyres at four-thirty. I like to hear the soft rush of the lift and the thud with which it stops ... and the heavy male tread of responsible feet down the corridors.' (TW, 169)

These are the various sides of the single personality: together they compose the singular moment, the globe of life. "We have laced the world together with our ships. The globe is strung with our lines" (TW, 200).

It is Pervical, the silent seventh character, revealed only through the other members, who will bring these singular petals into "one single flower" (TW, 127), each separate voice into a "turning wheel of single sound". The seven friends meet in London for a farewell dinner, the evening of Percival's departure for India. For a moment, there is peace and wholeness:

> 'Let us hold it for one moment', said Jinny; 'love, hatred, by whatever name we call it, this globe whose walls are made of Percival, of youth and beauty, and something so deep sunk within us that we shall perhaps never make this moment out of one man again .' (TW, 145)

Percival is a redeemer, a healer, and, unlike the other six members, is whole, embodying the promise of "perpetual life". He remains the lucid "point of emphasis" (TW, 233) among them. "'It is Percival', said Louis ... 'who makes us aware that these attempts to say, 'I am this, I am that' ... are false'" (TW, 137). Percival speaks for the knowledge that disparate entities must create the pattern of life and remain transcendent above being "simply one thing". He represents "the swelling and splendid moment" (TW, 233), the fleeting revelation which spreads, and brings multiplicity into a singular, luminous awareness. He becomes the "rod of light" around which the six members assemble, healed.

The globe, however, which he creates, is made simply of air, transparent and ephemeral; it bursts when, shortly after his departure, he dies: the suspension of the wave crashes, chaos once again reigns.

> 'The crystal, the globe of life as one calls it, far from being hard and cold to the touch, has the walls of thinnest air. If I press them all will burst. Whatever sentence I extract whole and entire from this cauldron is only a string of six little fish that let themselves be caught while a million others leap and sizzle ...' (TW, 256)

The six members meet again in London, years later, and once again experience the familiar, transitory consummation:

> 'Against the gateway, against some cedar tree I saw blaze bright, Neville, Jinny, Rhoda, Louis, Susan and myself, our life, our identity ... But we -- against the brick, against the branches, we six, out of how many million millions, for one moment out of what measureless abundance of past time and time to come, burnt there triumphant. The moment was all; the moment was enough.' (TW, 277-278)

But the moment is ephemeral and, like the wave, "breaks, burst[s] asunder, surrender[s] --" (TW, 278). "'We drew apart; we were consumed in the darkness of the trees ...'" (TW, 278).

Order is collected, suspended, and then crashes. Such is the flux of the wave, the moment, one's life, for "life had been imperfect, an unfinished phrase" (TW, 283). Dawn poises above the earth, and then cracks as the yellow arch appears upon the horizon, creating distinction, "real life". The novel ends where it began,

at dawn, at the moment of suspension, the moment of recollection, awaiting the fall of the wave.

> 'How then does light return to the world after the eclipse of the sun? Miraculously. Frailly. In thin stripes. It hangs like a glass cage. It is a hoop to be fractured by a tiny jar. There is a spark there. Next moment a flush of dun ... Suddenly a river snatches a blue light. The earth absorbs colour like a sponge ... It puts on weight; rounds itself; hangs pendent; settles and swings beneath our feet.' (TW, 286)

The globe, at the end of the day, will burst and become invisible by night, a shadow at dawn. The globe and the six friends have been left "to collect, to assemble, to heap together ... rise and confront the enemy" (TW, 293). Despite continuous dispersion, and the constant suspension and fall, rhythm remains a healer, and dawn, a restorer. Constant is the wave, constant the "swelling and splendid moment" of dawn.

> 'Dawn is some sort of whitening of the sky; some sort of renewal. Another day ... Another general awakening. The stars draw back and are extinguished. The bars deepen themselves between the waves ... Yes, this is the eternal revewal, the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again.
>
> 'And in me too the wave rises. It swells; it arches its back.' (TW, 296-297)

Eleanor Pargiter, in Woolf's next novel, The Years (1937), struggling to balance the globe in the hollow of her hand, will similarly have her faith redeemed by the arrival of dawn:

> It's useless, she thought, opening her hands. It must drop. It must fall ... For her too there would

> be endless night; endless dark ... But, thinking of dark, something baffled her; in fact it was growing light. The blinds were white. (TY, 462)

The Years, much like The Waves, traces a sequence of lives, as each one, separately as well as collectively, rounds itself, "wheeling, like the rays of a searchlight, the days, the weeks, the years pass[ing] one after another across the sky" (TY, 2). Woolf attempts to bring, under one spanning arch, the whole of the "human race" (TY, 459). "I long to feel my sails blow out over the whole of human life" (AWD, 197). The title of the novel changed four times before becoming The Years. The previous titles shed much light upon Woolf's purpose. Beginning with The Pargiters, it, after a brief period of time, became Here and Now; Woolf then toyed with the idea of Dawn, as well as with Ordinary People. Woolf attempts to capture, through exploring "myself and the world together" (TW, 443), the essence of the present moment, the "here and now", as it prevails in the wake of the past and the swell of the future.

Woolf concerns herself with the blending of matter with fluid consciousness, fact with vision, creating "one jelly, one mass ... a white counterpane world" (TY, 442). "I want to give the whole of present society -- nothing less: facts as well as vision. And to combine them both" (AWD, 197). The Years, then, becomes the revolving androgynous sphere which knows "peace and breadth" (AWD, 229). It ceases to be "this or that" or "simply one thing", but rather, will include

> satire, comedy, poetry, narrative ... I think I begin to grasp the whole. And it's to end with the press of daily normal life continuing ... in short a summing up of all I know, feel, laught at, despise, like, admire, hate and so on. (AWD, 198)

The Years spans close to fifty years, a duration which is both gentle and violent. Woolf explores consistency as well as flux, the feminine span of time, with the jaded masculine intrusion. Significantly, The Years begins at dusk and ends at dawn, both at the "swelling and splendid moment" of suspension, which rests in the pause between conflict and despair, perhaps "between the acts". Significantly again, "the season was beginning ... but ... over and over again the lullaby was always interrupted" (TY, 1). Perpetual is the struggle to shape the globe of life; just as the wave crashes, so too will the transparent globe burst, and the harmony of the lullaby be interrupted.

The spirit of war reigns, intermittently, throught the novel. So too, then, does masculine power, shown in the spirit of Mussolini, the "city men in their neat striped suits and bowler hats" (TY, 248), money, politics, business meetings and dinner parties. Amidst this imposed order, the feminine world struggles for its share of idealism. The visionary world of fantasy and calm is meshed through the fabric of the novel, but struggles to stand out against the broader strokes of the external world. The external sphere looks exclusively toward the future, seeing progression, victory, success. The inner consciousness, however, rests in the

androgynous present, which embodies both the past and the future; the visionary realm tries to see security in the past as well as hope in the "New World" (TY, 315) of the future. It celebrates "the present moment ... a sunflower .. a knot; a centre" (TY, 395). The masculine sector will threaten this unity through its narrow discernment of the world:

> Far away ... a horn hooted; a siren wailed on the river. The far-away sounds, the suggestion they brought in of other world, indifferent to this world, of people toiling, grinding, in the heart of darkness, in the depths of the night, made her say over Eleanor's words, Happy in this world, happy with living people. But how can one be 'happy'? she asked herself, in a world bursting with misery? On every placard at every street corner was Death; or worse -- tyranny; brutality; torture; the fall of civilisation; the end of freedom. We here ... are only sheltering under a leaf, which will be destroyed. (TY, 418-419)

The androgynous spirit advocates "living people", the present moment, the substance of "ordinary people". In the midst of Delia's elegant dinner party, her nephew North will ask, "where are the Sweeps and the Sewer-men, the Seamstresses and the Stevedores?" (TY, 436). Where, in other words, is the old woman whom Clarissa Dalloway sees through her window every evening preparing for sleep? Where is Mrs. Brown? Where is "human nature"? Instead, North is surrounded by an age obsessed with war and manifestos, fame and despair.

Each chapter begins, much like the interludes in The Waves, with a description of the weather. The weather, then, is a consolidating force within the novel. But,

paradoxically, the weather is also a symbol of disunity, constantly in flux, rarely consistent:

> It was an uncertain spring. The weather, perpetually changing, sent clouds of blue and of purple flying over the land. In the country farmers, looking at the fields, were apprehensive; in London umbrellas were opened and then shut by people looking up at the sky. But in April such weather was to be expected. Thousands of shop assistants made that remark ... (TY, 1)

Therefore, while the weather is something enduring and something that unifies (both the villagers as well as the novel), it is also something that spreads uncertainty, is evanescent and diverse. A similar tone of contrast is spread across the novel and the years, a tone of unrest and of joy. Through the span of fifty years, there are births and deaths, war and serenity, chaos and calm.

The masculine and feminine conventions are juxtaposed, finding conciliation in the constitution of Eleanor and the doctrine of the "New World". Eleanor speaks for the vision of the androgynous spirit, which is poised above the present, revelatory moment, "whole, beautiful, and entire" (TY, 398).

> There must be another life ... Not in dreams; but here and now, in this room, with living people ... This is too short, too broken ... We're only just beginning, she thought, to understand, here and there. (TY, 461)

Edward and Morris Pargiter appropriately sum up the impervious masculine perception. The son of a man who "stood there very erect ... as if he wished to give some

order, but could not at the moment think of any order to give" (TY, 15), Edward, like St. John Hirst and Neville before him, revels in the Classics and tradition. "He saw nothing but Greek in front of him ... He caught phrase after phrase exactly, firmly, more exactly ..." (TY, 52). Kitty Lasswade embraces the rigid world of social code and decorum: she "was formal; fashionable; with a dash of red on her lips" (TY, 268). Sarah Pargiter, however, is purely visionary, but to a similarly exclusive degree. Though she too advocates the "New World", she is utterly ineffectual, unaware of the formal, concrete world about her. She imagines a woman in the street as somebody "very beautiful; clothed in starlight; with green in her hair" (TY, 202). Eleanor, on the other hand, touches all of human life and, therefore, is a unifier of fragments: she aims "to mix people; to do away with the absurd conventions of English life" (TY, 429). She is "the soother, the maker-up of quarrels, the buffer between [her sister] and the intensities and strifes of family life" (TY, 13). She will piece the fragments together, smoothing the edges, creating the "gigantic pattern, momentarily perceptible" (TY, 398).

Eleanor speaks for the recognition of the "New World", which comprehensively embraces instinct and humanity. The following dialogue between Nicholas and Eleanor sheds light upon the spirit of the "New World", and the nature of androgyny and freedom:

'D'you think we're going to improve?' she asked.

'Yes, yes,' he said ...

'But how ... how can we improve ourselves ... live more ... live more naturally ... better ... How can we?'

'It's only a question,' he said ... 'of learning. The soul ...'

'Yes -- the soul?' she prompted him.

'The soul -- the whole being,' he explained. He hollowed his hands as if to enclose a circle. 'It wishes to expand; to adventure; to form -- new combinations?'

'Yes, yes,' she said, as if to assure him ...

'Whereas now ... this is how we live, screwed up into one hard little, tight little -- knot?'

'Knot, knot -- yes, that's right,' she nodded.

'Each in his own little cublicle ... his own cross or holy book ... his fire, his wife ...'
(TY, 319)

Modern society is fractured by one-sided convictions which force roles and identities, rendering people immobile. In the "New World", all spirits will coalesce into a larger, peaceful humanity. The novel will continue to ask, "When shall we be free? When shall we live adventurously, wholly, not like cripples in a cave?" (TY, 320).

Eleanor is the principal prophet of this new sanctifying world. "Here and there a star pierced the blue. She had a sense of immensity and peace -- as if something had been consumed .... " (TY, 321). As she walks outside, the sun is rising and a "broad fan of light" (TY, 323), the sign of the covenant, sweeps across the sky.

Delia's party at the novel's end resembles Clarissa Dalloway's party: amidst disparity, there is healing and consummation. Each member of the Pargiter family is present. Three generations mix and merge. Eleanor stands poised as the artist who is able to receive and comprise all:

> She waved her hand as if to embrace the miscellaneous company, the young, the old, the dancers, the talkers ... Happy in this world, she thought, happy with living people! (TY, 418)

In the midst of the party, Eleanor envisions, but fails to express, the far-reaching, harmonious entity, the "sweet nut ... fruit, the fountain that's in all of us" (TY, 444).

> She felt, or rather she saw, not a place, but a state of being, in which there was real laughter, real happiness, and this fractured world was whole; whole, and free. But how could she say it? (TY, 420)

The novel ends at "dawn -- the new day" (TY, 466). Eleanor has experienced her illumination, and now grasps the elusive knowledge, the elusive "fruit", one minute suspended, the next minute crashing, one minute dark, the next light. Such is the nature of the "fountain" within every being, flowing in and out of masculine and feminine identities, the past and the future, the fluid and the firm. Eleanor supports the globe in her hands, only to realise the ease with which it is dropped, and with that, becomes aware of the speed at which day breaks:

> she was about to grasp something that just evaded her ... She hollowed her hands in her lap ... She held her hands hollowed; she felt that she wanted to enclose the present moment; to make it stay; to fill it fuller and fuller, with the past, the present and the future, until it shone, whole, bright, deep with understanding ...
>
> It must drop. It must fall ... She looked ahead of her ... she saw ... a very long dark tunnel. But, thinking of the dark, something baffled her; in fact it was growing light. The blinds were white.
> (TY, 461-462)

The circle is completed; the circle begins once again in Woolf's final novel Between the Acts. The flux of life resumes: "All is over. The wave has broken" (BTA, 73).

CHAPTER FIVE

"Scraps, Orts and Fragments"

Between the Acts

"Each is part of the whole...We act different parts; but are the same...I speak only as one of the audience, one of ourselves...'Scraps, orts and fragments! Surely, we should unite?' "

- Between the Acts

Between the Acts was published in 1941, posthumously. The title suggest that "the sweet nut ... fruit, the fountain" (TY, 144) within the novel, life, and Miss La Trobe's pageant, lies in the suspension "between the acts", between the two World Wars, between masculinity and femininity. Woolf is concerned with what occurs between the two poles of opposition, in the interlude "between the acts", "between two fluidities" (BTA, 148). The suspension will be held, briefly, by the pageant: the "treasure" will be dispersed, the flux of life will resume. Such is the essence of humanity and the silver globe. "All were retreating, withdrawing and dispersing" (BTA, 146). Woolf's vision, however, does not fail with the recommencement of disorder; rather, her vision is brilliantly re-enacted: in order for "perpetual life", every suspension must be followed by a crash, every "eternal renewal" followed by the "incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again". The androgynous revelation, by nature, is ephemeral. The following act has begun at the precise moment of revelation, as wave follows wave: "She set down her glass. She heard the first words" (BTA, 154).

In Woolf's final novel, the chaos of the past meets with the prevailing present. The present, it is learned, will always be just as fragmented as the past, for they are one and the same, born of each other, perpetual: "'The Victorians,' Mrs. Swithin mused. 'I don't believe' she said ... 'that there ever were such people.

Only you and me and William dressed differently'" (BTA, 127). Each individual is both all-embracing and singular, not "simply one thing"; for we "act different parts; but are the same" (BTA, 139). The past was once the future, and the future will soon be the past. Human nature at large bridges the gaps and heals the wounds. In order to balance the "secret of perpetual life", the past must be embraced peaceably with the future. The past must not be penalized for "the scars made by the Britons" (BTA, 7), but, rather, must be healed by the celebration of the present. It must be a contribution and not a disruption. Hence, the money earned from the pageant will be used to install modern electric lights in the ancient church: the present contributes to the past, the past to the present.

Upon completing The Years, Woolf wrote in her diary:

> Will another novel ever swim up? If so, how? The only hint I have towards it is that it's to be dialogue: and poetry: and prose; all quite distinct. (AWD, 285)

The only hint is that, like the cathedral dome, the novel will be arched and far-reaching, enclosing every element of life. The action of the novel takes place at Pointz Hall, the centre where the villagers, guests and servants meet. Significantly, the original title for the novel was Poyntzet Hall. Woolf writes:

> Why not Poyntzet Hall: a centre: all literature discussed in connection with real little incongruous living humour: and anything that comes into my head

> ... 'We' ... composed of many different things ... we all life, all art, all waifs and strays -- a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole -- the present state of my mind? ... a perpetual variety and change from intensity to prose, and facts -- ... (AWD, 289-290)

The novel, like Pointz Hall, will be the androgynous "centre: all literature", all of humanity, embraced by the arching "Present Time: Ourselves".

Two characters in particular embody, through various means, the androgynous vision, the vision that in this novel will offer free will: Miss La Trobe speaks for public vision, while Lucy Swithin speaks for the private, inner vision. The set of dualities threatening this free will is ordered in the form of faith versus reason, instinct versus duty, and nature versus society (civilization). In terms of the reason/faith dichotomy, Lucy is associated with visionary faith and spirituality throughout the novel. "Was it that she had no body? Up in the clouds, like an air ball, her mind touched ground now and then with a shock of surprise" (BTA, 87). Lucy is able to transcend the one-sidedness of the mind and therefore acknowledges that in order for life-affirmation and health, opposites must cease warring and instead interact side by side, peaceably, productively, from a single centre. She does not separate history from the present, nor civilization from modernity, for above all, "she belonged to the unifiers" (BTA, 88). "Above, the air rushed; beneath was water. She stood between two fluidities ..." (BTA, 148). Lucy exemplifies the artistic vision of continuity and solidarity; it is not

until the pageant, however, that Lucy's private vision is affirmed by Miss La Trobe's public offering. Their visions depend upon one another for consummation. "Their eyes met in a common effort to bring a common meaning to birth" (BTA, 112). Miss La Trobe artistically solidifies, with "bolts of iron", Lucy's "feathery" vision of singularity and common humanity, as Lily Briscoe solidifies the vision of Mrs. Ramsay. Together, the two women affirm the valuable spread of time and energy which, if given the opportunity, will stand poised above the growing chasm, and provide the "one spirit [that] animates the whole" (BTA, 145). The following passage symbolizes the diverse members of the audience, fragmented and chaotic, and yet unified by a common bond:

> The Barn was empty. Mice slid in and out of holes or stood upright, nibbling. Swallows were busy with straw in pockets of earth in the rafters. Countless beetles and insects of various sorts burrowed in the dry wood. A stray bitch had made the dark corner where the sacks stood a lying-in ground for her puppies. All these eyes, expanding and narrowing, some adapted to light, others to darkness, looked from angles and edges. (BTA, 76)

The barn "had been built over seven hundred years ago and reminded some people of a Greek temple, others of the middle ages ... " (BTA, 75). Surviving the span of time, the barn now houses all of human kind.

Bartholomew Oliver and his sister Lucy Swithin provide the dichotomy in which the rest of the characters are "caught and caged" (BTA, 128). Bart is associated with the masculine role of war, tradition and reason,

always "fumbling in his mind" (BTA, 36). Lucy, as mentioned, represents faith, intuition and peace. "What she saw he didn't; what he saw she didn't" (BTA, 23), for "she belonged to the unifiers; he to the separatists" (BTA, 88). Ironically, the prevailing duality is effectively introduced with a discussion of weather, much like the introduction of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse, and the symbol for diversity in The Years.

> Every summer, for seven summers now, Isa had heard the same words; about ... the weather ...
>
> Certainly the weather was variable. It was green in the garden; grey the next ... a lack of symmetry and order in the clouds ...
>
> 'It's very unsettled. It'll rain, I'm afraid. We can only pray', she added, and fingered her crucifix.
>
> 'And provide umbrellas', said her brother.
>
> Lucy flushed. He had struck her faith. When she said 'pray', he added 'umbrellas'. She half covered the cross with her fingers. (BTA, 20-21)

Within this large scheme of reason and faith, civilization and nature, there are various characters, Bart and Isa in particular, who internalize the polarity and become fractured by the power of untempered society, and the lack of pattern in the world at large. With no centre toward which to work, the characters are imprisoned between the acts, unable to realise freedom, or a medium through which to attain the harmonious state. Woolf's men and women, then, become like the "donkey who couldn't choose between hay and turnips and so starved" (BTA, 47). While Bart is trapped because he knows,

exclusively, the power of reason, Isa and Giles are "entangled" (BTA, 8) because they cease to acknowledge their free will; they remain hedged in between, not creatively transcendent, but starved and desperately divided. They choose neither hay nor turnips and thus remain like Sarah Pargiter, wholly ineffectual products "of love; and of hate" (BTA, 39). Allowing the poles to remain strictly oppositional, and unable to acknowledge choice, Isa and Giles remain fixed and stagnant.

Bart Oliver, "of the Indian Civil Service, retired" (BTA, 7), is, then, the masculine personification of fact and reason. Unlike his sister, Lucy, Bart is set within the frame of tradition, destitute of both inner and outer vision, unaware of the larger, perhaps more redeeming self. "He would carry the torch of reason till it went out in the darkness of the cave. For herself, every morning, kneeling, she protected her vision" (BTA, 149). Like Mr. Ramsay and William Bradshaw, Bart is devoted to unyielding truths at the expense of a larger reality. The pageant serves to reveal the audience boldly to itself, in its most disjointed, ensnared state. Significantly, however, Bart Oliver will fall asleep just before the first act, successfully avoiding the telling realities which are to be revealed: he remains void of any illumination. He is content to remain ignorant of the freeing solution, for "he couldn't be bothered. With his head on one side, his hand dangling above the dog's head he slept; he snored" (BTA, 53).

Bart appropriately applauds the loudest and most emphatically during the skit "Where there's a Will there's a Way", for "Reason held the centre of the stage alone ... Reason surveyed this domestic scene from her lofty eminence unmoved" (BTA, 93). In a moment of identification, Bart calls out "'Reason, begad! Reason!' ... and looked at his son as if exhorting him to give over these womanish vapours and be a man, Sir" (BTA, 99). Relentlessly, Bart stands for rationality and the upholding of masculine tradition, as in war. He treats his dog the way he would command his troops:

> 'Heel! ... heel, you brute!' ...
>
> 'Heel!' the old man bawled, as if he were commanding a regiment ... as he cringed at the old man's feet, a string was slipped over his collar; the noose that old Oliver always carried with him. (BTA, 13)

Just as the "chuff, chuff, chuff" of the gramophone drowns out and divides the harmony of music, so too Bart shuts out any tempering "womanish vapours" or motion toward reconciliation.

Lucy Swithin provides the opposing structure concerned with humanity and faith. What sets her apart from Bart is that she possesses the knowledge of and desire for unity and totality; the pageant will fertilize her knowledge, allowing for a complete and redemptive vision. While Bart's convictions are taken to a narrowing, destructive degree, Lucy's creed remains broad, and therefore procreative. Lucy, like Percival, stands apart as a healing figure, for she is the only

member of the audience who is aware that diversity does not have to be oppositional, but, rather, can be the seeds for unity. She knows well that civilization can walk side by side with nature, hate beside love, man beside woman, the public beside the private. Lucy becomes the essence of Woolfian resolution, and Miss La Trobe, the androgynous creator who will transform her knowledge into a work of art. Lucy's vision transcends exclusion and rests peacefully in the awareness of a greater, more humanitarian pattern.

Throughout the novel, one recognises the conflict between unspoiled nature and society, with its exploitation of nature by modern man. Lucy, however, while reading her Outline of History, acknowledges that nature and society do not have to be feuding dualities but, rather, that the one is simply born out of the other, making them, in fact, part and parcel of one another. Life's components are "neither one thing nor the other" (BTA, 129) but, rather, are part of a continuous circle which picks up where the other entity leaves off. Opposition, ideally, can be transcended, and the universal whole, into which all entities peaceably fit, can prevail.

> She had been waked by the birds ... she had stretched for her favourite reading -- an Outline of History ... thinking of rhododendron forests in Picadilly; when the entire continent, not then, she understood, divided by a channel, was all one; populated, she understood, by elephant-bodied, seal-necked, heaving, surging, slowly writhing, and, she supposed, barking monsters; the iguanodon, the mammoth, and the mastodon; from whom presumably,

she thought, jerking the window open, we descend.
(BTA, 10-11)

Despite the "scars" and feuds, each generation, each family, each individual, is part of a larger, schematized whole; it is the aim of the "unifiers", then, to journey back toward the primeval centre, connect it with the present centre, and thus "imaginative[ly] reconstruct ... the past" (BTA, 11). By embodying a vision which considers the continuum of the past an offering to the present, Lucy remains unbound, "as if she were of two minds" (BTA, 58), possessing a freedom and selfhood which the others do not share. " ... Mrs. Swithin paused; she was given to increasing the bounds of the moment by flights into past or future ... a cross gleaming gold on her breast" (BTA, 11). Lucy makes the moment "swelling" and luminous by embracing both sides of the dichotomy. Where there is compassion and continuity, there is a sense of oneness.

While the other characters become increasingly more static, Mrs. Swithin becomes actively healing, "as if the floor were fluid under her" (BTA, 19). William Dodge is one of the Olivers' guests; much like Rhoda, he has been destroyed by the forces and expectations that surround him. Considering himself a "half-man" (BTA, 59), he is hardly fully androgynous, but, rather, is incomplete, broken in a world that fails to redeem him. However, he is perhaps the most receptive member of the audience during the pageant, suggesting his potential for wholeness or illumination: "There was Dodge, the lip

reader, [Miss La Trobe's] semblable, her conspirator, a seeker like her after hidden faces" (BTA, 150). Giles reacts to him with disdain and antagonism, because he is "simply a --" (BTA, 48), the dash in place of "homosexual" or "bugger", the word Giles "could not speak in public". Lucy, however, is able to see within him, to see the common despair and, therefore, to heal his "scars".

> He saw her eyes only. And he wished to kneel before her, to kiss her hand, and to say: 'At school they held me under a bucket of dirty water, Mrs Swithin; when I looked up, the world was dirty, Mrs. Swithin; so I married; but my child's not my child, Mrs Swithin. I'm a half-man, Mrs. Swithin; a flickering, mind-divided little snake in the grass, Mrs. Swithin; as Giles saw; but you've healed me ... (BTA, 57)

Lucy will help to turn his severed identity into wholeness.

Quickly the reader is reminded of both Percival's and Eleanor's ability to cure the "deformed". Mrs. Swithin is able to turn the disillusionment that society has created into clarity and repose. Through faith, she finds affirmation: "'It is time ... to go and join --'" (BTA, 58). One senses her ability to spread unity, through her celebration of a future peace:

> She was off, they guessed, on a circular tour of the imagination -- one-making. Sheep, cows, grass, trees, ourselves -- all are one. If discordant, producing harmony -- if not to us, to a gigantic ear attached to a gigantic head. And thus -- she was smiling benignly -- the agony of the particular sheep, cow, or human being is necessary; and so -- she was beaming seraphically at the gilt vane in the

> distance -- we reach the conclusion that all is harmony, could we hear it. And we shall. Her eyes now rested on the white summit of a cloud.
> (BTA, 127)

By attempting to understand both halves of humanity, with compassion and a celebration of the interrelatedness, Lucy contributes to a freer, more hopeful life pattern.

Isa and Giles are the most effective examples of "entangled" characters who have lost their free will to society's expectations; in so doing, they sacrifice their ability to move toward redemption. Isa and Giles reflect the severed and at times meaningless world. As James Hafley comments: "So long as a person shields his identity, he cannot act with free will; when he transcends personality he achieves freedom and movement in becoming" (Hafley, 148). It becomes the aim of the pageant to heal the wounds of civilization and create a oneness that will transcend devastation.

Isa Oliver appears on the first page of the novel; she is confined by her husband and by the dogma of society which plagues her, "suppressed by the leaden duty she owed to others" (BTA, 53).

> 'That was the burden ... laid on me in the cradle; murmured by waves; breathed by restless elm trees; crooned by singing women; what we must remember: what we would forget. (BTA, 114)

Isa is tortured by the past, but, similarly, is unable to live in the present. She is exclusively aligned with the

poetic and the romantic, tormented by the steel roots preventing her flight. She looks to Rupert Haines, the neighbouring gentleman farmer, who sparks her imagination and passion: "in his ravaged face she always felt mystery; and in his silence, passion" (BTA, 8). But they are both separately married, entrapped by convention:

> The words made two rings, perfect rings, that floated them, herself and Haines, like two swans down stream. But his snow-white breast was circled with a tangle of dirty duckweed; and she too, in her webbed feet was entangled, by her husband the stockbroker. Sitting on her three-cornered chair she swayed, with her dark pigtails hanging, and her body like a bolster in its faded dressing-gown.
> (BTA, 8)

The love she feels for Rupert represents a freeing love, one void of societal conventions and established conditions, for it is instinctive and full of mystery. The love she feels for her husband, however, much like Mrs. Dalloway's love for Richard, is ridden with duty:

> Inside the glass, in her eyes, she saw what she had felt overnight for the ravaged, the silent, the romantic gentleman farmer. 'In love', was in her eyes. But outside, on the washstand, on the dressing-table, among the silver boxes and tooth-brushes, was the other love; love for her husband, the stockbroker -- 'The father of my children,' she added, slipping into the cliché conveniently provided by fiction. inner love was in the eyes; outer love on the dressing-table.
> (BTA, 14)

Like Clarissa, who at times feels she exists only in terms of her duty to her husband, Isa loses her knowledge of self and instead is "Mrs Giles Oliver" (BTA, 14), "Sir

Richard's daughter; and niece of the two old ladies at Wimbledon who were so proud, being O'Neils, of their descent from the Kings of Ireland" (BTA, 16). In her despair, she must at times (usually when she feels threatened by Mrs. Manresa) convince herself of her love for Giles, which she does by recalling that he is "the father of my children".

> Hirsute, handsome, virile, the young man in blue jacket and brass buttons, standing in a beam of dusty light, was her husband. And she his wife. Their relations ... were ... 'strained' ... Of whom was he thinking as he stood with his face turned? Not of Isa. Of Mrs. Manresa? (BTA, 80)

Isa despises her role as mother and wife; unable to seek the vision of freedom, she remains bitter and immobile: "And she loathed the domestic, the possessive; the maternal. And he knew it and did it on purpose to tease her, the old brute, her father-in-law" (BTA, 18). She allows the rigidity of society to strip her of her larger self and convictions. Seeking emancipation, Isa envisions the "single flower" that the men and women in The Waves compose:

> 'Now may I pluck,' Isa murmured, picking a rose, 'my single flower. The white or the pink? And press it so, twixt thumb and finger ...' ...
>
> She dropped her flower. What single, separate leaf could she press? None. (BTA, 113)

She yearns to rest in the "dim field where no evening lets fall her mantle" (BTA, 113), posed between night and day: "nor sun rises. All's equal there" (BTA, 113).

Isa writes reams of poetry, but hides it in an account book "in case Giles suspected. 'Abortive', was the word that expressed her" (BTA, 16). She recites the verses she has written in private. She is bound wholly to her domestic position, which usurps her more creative being.

> Isabella felt prisoned. Through the bars of the prison, through the sleep haze that deflected them, blunt arrows bruised her; of love, then of hate. (BTA, 52)

Isa is caught in the void between love and hate, between the two warring halves. For her, the "plot was only there to beget emotion. There were only two emotions: love; and hate" (BTA, 69). She knows nothing of the shadows of the reconciling third emotion, peace. She is caught precariously between the two acts: "how much she felt when he came in, not a dapper city gent, but a cricketer, of love; and of hate" (BTA, 39). What she does not realise, and what the pageant seeks to express, is that the sides of the duality, when resilient, can procreatively, affirmatively, live peaceably as one single entity.

Isa's husband Giles is similarly divided, reflecting the larger breach surrounding him. Slowly he becomes more and more distanced from his true self, as the demands of the modern world become more powerful. Just as Isa hides her poetry, Giles hides his romantic, perhaps more feminine desire to farm, through his adherence to the masculine world of stockbroking. Giles,

instead of nurturing his more feminine instincts, is forced to surround himself by the sterility of stocks and bonds. William Dodge similarly appears to have feminine leanings ("'He's an artist'"), and yet he too must accept the propriety of being a clerk. "William Dodge corrected her: 'I'm a clerk in an office' --" (BTA, 32). They become products of "the infernal, age long and eternal order issued from on high. And obey" (BTA, 89). From the outset, one senses Giles's resentful commitment, like Isa, to duty and convention:

> Giles had come. He had seen the great silver-plated car ... and had gone to his room to change. The ghost of convention rose to the surface, as a blush or a tear rises to the surface at the pressure of emotions; so the car touched his training. He must change. And he came into the dining-room looking like a cricketer ... though he was enraged. Had he not read, in the morning paper, in the train, that sixteen men had been shot, others prisoned ... Yet he changed ... Given his choice, he would have chosen to farm. But he was not given his choice. So one thing led to another; and the conglomeration of things pressed you flat; held you fast, like a fish in water. So he came for the week-end, and changed. (BTA, 37-38)

With conventional looks and dress, Giles senses the insanity of the upholding of tradition in the midst of disaster, the futility of establishment in the midst of war and despair. The conventions of civilization have glossed over the meaning and the pattern of life, as well as the more impulsive side of Giles.

> Aunt Lucy, foolish, free; always ... expressing her amazement, her amusement, at men who spent their lives, buying and selling -- ploughs? glass beads was it? or stocks and shares? -- to savages who

> wished most oddly -- for were they not beautiful naked? -- to dress and live like the English? (BTA, 38)

The English have spoiled native cultures. Giles, too, senses the beauty in simplicity, in the earth, in one's nakedness, and yet he is unable to express his disdain. Where there is exploitation and technology, untempered, there is isolation. But when nature merges peaceably with a receptive society, one which honours the past, there is totality and freedom.

Giles reveals a connection with the savage and the violent, suggesting his instinctive, and yet distorted, reverence for the past. This violence stems from his frustration and imprisonment, his anger with having a citified role and personality thrust upon him.

> Words came to the surface -- he remembered 'a stricken deer in whose lean flank the world's harsh scorn has struck its thorn ... Exiled from its festival, the music turned ironical ... For they are dead, and I ... I ... I,' he repeated. (BTA, 66)

The savage element underlines Giles's innate belief in unspoiled nature, instinctive humanity, and the flesh, that which has been repressed by the sterile world of stockbroking, reason and money. Perhaps identifying himself with the helpless snake curled in the grass, Giles for the first time takes action against the passive position he has been socialized into.

> There, couched in the grass, curled in an olive green ring, was a snake. Dead? No, choked with a toad in its mouth. The snake was unable to swallow; the toad was unable to die. A spasm made the ribs contract; blood oozed. It was birth the wrong way round -- a monstrous inversion. So, raising his foot, he stamped on them. The mass crushed and slithered. The white canvas on his tennis shoes was bloodstained and sticky. But it was action. Action relieved him. (BTA, 75)

The "monstrous inversion" is perhaps the life of futility which Giles has laid out for himself. Wanting instinctively to farm, he has sacrificed free will to expectation: freedom, then, has been inverted and has produced servitude, a "monstrous" untruth. The passage reveals Giles's ineffectiveness: he is caught between the acts, "unable to swallow ... unable to die", static and immobile. Without effective action, there is no deliverance, no reconciliation, but rather, a gruesome "inversion", when opposites collide rather than complement. Before "another life might be born" (BTA, 198), in other words, before there is peace and procreation, Giles, as well as Isa and Bart, must know imprisonment and conflict. "But first they must fight, as the dog fox fights with the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night" (BTA, 158).

Significantly, Giles feels free and at ease when he is near Mrs. Manresa, the "wild child of nature" (BTA, 34), who stands for the instinctive, repressed side of Giles:

> She looked ... goddess-like, buoyant, abundant, her cornucopia running over ... Giles would keep his

> orbit so long as she weighted him to the earth. She stirred the stagnant pool of his old heart ... (BTA, 89)

Mrs. Manresa embodies the world of the senses and the body. Like Jinny, she is vain, egotistical, "vulgar" in her self-celebration. Although impulsive, she is acutely aware of society and her outer appearance: "Her hat, her rings, her finger nails red as roses, smooth as shells, were there for all to see" (BTA, 33). She revels in gossip, the superficial, "mere trash":

> Vulgar she was in her gestures, in her whole person, over-sexed, over-dressed for a picnic. But what a desirable, at least valuable, quality it was -- for everybody felt, directly she spoke, 'She's said it, she's done it, not I', and could take advantage of the breach of decorum, of the fresh air that blew in ... Did she not restore to old Bartholomew his spice islands, his youth? (BTA, 34)

Mrs. Manresa is active, brutally honest, free; she is potentially Giles's other half, just as Rupert Haines is Isa's repressed half:

> ... Giles, with whom she felt in conspiracy. A thread united them -- visible, invisible, like those threads, now seen, now not, that unite trembling grass blades in autumn before the sun rises. (BTA, 45)

She is all impulse and flesh, while Giles teeters futilely in between instinct and reason. She is the only member of the audience who takes advantage of the mirror being held before her; while the rest shrink away from being revealed to themselves, Mrs. Manresa, like Jinny before her, alone revels in her satisfied image. She

refuses to acknowledge her narrow, misguided little life. "Alone she preserved unashamed her identity, and faced without blinking herself. Calmly she reddened her lips" (BTA, 135).

Mrs. Manresa stands apart as the passionate, unashamed member of the group, although unaware of any higher meaning. She, perhaps unwittingly, brings Giles into a more heightened, healed existence. Ironically, Isa loves Rupert Haines for the instinctive, earthly characteristics which Giles suppresses but simultaneously yearns to possess. Giles loves Mrs. Manresa for the sensual, impulsive characteristics which he too represses and yearns to be made whole by. Therefore, Woolf comments upon the horror of repressing one's true self under the power and dominion of society. Instead of Giles and Isa meeting one another with collective compassion, they dangerously clash, only widening the gap which already penalizes them.

The pageant serves as an effective example of the rectifying power of art. The pageant is meant to nurture the collective wounds that society has created by slowly revealing the sores and "scars" themselves, all the while encouraging compassion and common humanity.

Miss La Trobe is the androgynous artist who makes this potential solidarity possible. A woman with visionary and poetic instincts, she is also controlling and sternly empowered. She balances the masculine and

feminine spheres, merging reason and faith artistically. She is an orchestrator, an asserter of order. "She was always all agog to get things up" (BTA, 46). She is like Lily Briscoe, who, with "Chinese eyes", is said to be exotic, set apart from the rest: "With that name she wasn't presumably pure English ... her eyes and something about her always made Mrs. Bingham suspect that she had Russian blood in her" (BTA, 46). One senses Miss La Trobe's physically androgynous nature, rejecting the conventional stereotypes that suggest how both a man and a woman should appear.

> Outwardly she was swarthy, sturdy and thick set; strode about the fields in a smock frock; sometimes with a cigarette in her mouth; often with a whip in her hand; and used rather strong language -- perhaps, then, she wasn't altogether a lady? At any rate, she had a passion for getting things up.
> (BTA, 46)

Attention is also drawn to her Lesbian affair with "the actress who had shared her bed" (BTA, 153).

Significantly, Miss La Trobe sustains the delicate equilibrium she creates only for the length of the performance: the moment the music ceases and the audience is left on its own, dispersion and chaos sets in once again. The men and women continue to move closer to an inner conciliation, which, by nature, is ephemeral; but between Mrs. Swithin's actualized vision, and Isa and Giles's imminent communion at the end of the novel, there is room for hope. Miss La Trobe, like Woolf, encourages humanity to become whole, to question, and to acknowledge

an ultimate liberation. She inspires the supreme miracle, which affirms the knowledge that human beings are not instinctively combative, but, rather, are fluid and capable of compassion. Ultimately, human beings are linked by a common "fountain" of creativity, which, at all costs, must be reaffirmed. For they "were neither one thing nor the other; neither Victorians nor themselves. They were suspended ..." (BTA, 129). Woolf advocates autonomy and independence, but only when fused with empathy, for "we are members one of another. Each is part of the whole ... We act different parts; but are the same" (BTA, 139).

Nature and civilization cease to oppose when they co-exist in ordered balance, with the knowledge that they too are one and the same. It is significant that Miss La Trobe chooses an outside setting in which to have her pageant; from the outset, she manages to merge nature with the audience of a modern world.

> 'That's the place for a pageant ... Winding in and out between the trees ...
>
> There the stage; here the audience; and down there among the bushes a perfect dressing-room for the actors.' (BTA, 46)

Miss La Trobe suggests that traditional opposites can meet as complements of one another. After the play, Lucy asks, "Did you feel ... what [Mr. Streatfield] said: we act different parts but are the same?" (BTA, 155). The pageant emphasizes the knowledge that each being has the

same primal roots, despite the vanity and dividedness of modern society. Throughout the pageant as well as the novel, one hears "the primeval voice sounding loud in the ear of the present moment" (BTA, 103).

The pageant calls to mind the interrelatedness of the audience to the actors, the public to the private. "'The play keeps running in my head' ... they stood there holding their cups, remembering the play" (BTA, 79). By exploring the evolution of humans from a state of instinct and simplicity in the Middle Ages to one of fractures and violation in the present day, Miss La Trobe attempts to show that such disintegration and warring is born out of a lack of love and empathy between one another, an inability to accept diversity as the roots of unity. With love there is understanding and, with that, reconciliation. The importance of human love becomes the central idea in the pageant and novel, bridging the gap between oppositions. The pageant carries the audience from England during the Middle Ages through the Age of Reason, and on to the present day, June, 1939; one recognises the disintegration of faith, the spirit, and the free individual. Material gain becomes of the greatest importance, along with a celebration of reason and war. The audience watches the disintegration ensue: only "the tick, tick, tick, seemed to hold them together, tranced" (BTA, 63). As, perhaps subconsciously, they are revealed to their own common frailties and fate, they momentarily rest in the peace of solution. "Peace was the third emotion. Love. Hate. Peace. Three emotions

made the ply of human life" (BTA, 70). At last, along with a wide array of other Woolfian characters, beginning with The Voyage Out and continuing through Between the Acts, Isa recognises, however briefly, that there is indeed a third, reconciling emotion.

The moment the first scene ends and the interval ensues, the audience diverges and the newly created unity is broken.

> 'Curse! Blast! Damn 'em!' Miss La Trobe in her rage stubbed her toe against a root. Here was her downfall; here was the Interval ... Just as she had brewed emotion, she split it ...
>
> At that, the audience stirred. Some rose briskly; others stooped, retrieving walking-sticks, hats, bags. And then, as they raised themselves ... The music chanted: Dispersed are we. It moaned: Dispersed are we. It lamented: Dispersed are we, as they streamed, spotting the grass with colour, across the lawns, and down the paths: Dispersed are we". (BTA, 72-73)

Miss La Trobe arranges, for the sake of coherence, for music to be heard as the members of the audience drink their tea; now, however, not even the music manages to hold the members together. Isa recognises the jolt: "All is over. The wave has broken. Left us stranded, high and dry. Single, separate on the shingle. Broken is the three-fold ply ..."(BTA, 73). There has been the rise and the crash of the wave, with only a brief suspension; hence, the "three-fold ply" is broken. When the act closes, reconciliation is shattered, or, at the very least, it fades. Centring her entire being upon

artistic coherence, Miss La Trobe stands by and watches, with despair, the disintegration ensue:

> Now Miss La Trobe stepped out from her hiding. Flowing, and streaming, on the grass, on the gravel, still for one moment she held them together -- the dispersing company. Hadn't she, for twenty-five minutes, made them see? A vision imparted was relief from agony ... for one moment ... one moment. Then the music petered out on the last word we ... She saw Giles Oliver with his back to the audience ... She hadn't made them see. It was a failure, another damned failure! As usual. Her vision escaped her. (BTA, 74-75)

The interval ends and the audience begins to gather again. Despite the chaos and distraction, the audience slowly comes to a greater awareness:

> How can we deny that this brave music, wafted from the bushes, is expressive of some inner harmony? 'When we wake ... the day breaks us with its hard mallet blows.' 'The office ... compels disparity. Scattered, shattered ... So we answer to the infernal, agelong and eternal order issued from on high. And obey. 'Working, serving, pushing, striving, earning wages ...'
>
> For I hear music, they were saying. Music wakes us. Music makes us see the hidden, join the broken. Look and listen. See the flowers ... And the trees ... (BTA, 89-90)

The rest of the crowd remains unaware of Miss La Trobe's message: "The audience turned to one another and began to talk. Scraps and fragments reached Miss La Trobe where she stood ..." (BTA, 90).

In the second half of the pageant, Miss La Trobe reveals the audience to itself by holding up a mirror, "bright enough to reflect, presumably, ourselves?" (BTA, 133).

Miss La Trobe once again makes the audience inextricably part of the pageant, simultaneously revealing their fractured, weathered selves.

> Flashing, dazzling, dancing, jumping. Now old Bart ... he was caught. Now Manresa. Here a nose ... There a skirt ... Then trousers only ... Now perhaps a face ... Ourselves? But that's cruel. To snap us as we are, before we've had time to assume ... And only, too, in parts ... That's what's so distorting and upsetting and utterly unfair. (BTA, 133)

Miss La Trobe spares nothing, but candidly unmasks the reality of their lives. "And the audience saw themselves, not whole by any means, but at any rate sitting still" (BTA, 135). The corruption of civilization, the evils of wealth and materialism, and the deficiency of human love is boldly put before them. Simultaneously, Miss La Trobe presents the span of history, through all the ages, prevailing as part of the greater whole, but choosing to remain as disparate as the audience. "They were all caught and caged; prisoners; watching a spectacle" (BTA, 128). The audience is the spectacle, bound and unaware.

The pageant concludes with a telling voice speaking over the gramophone. "All you can see of yourselves is scraps, orts and fragments? Well then listen to the gramophone affirming ..." (BTA, 136-137). What follows, before the members are able to disperse entirely, is one of Woolf's (and Miss La Trobe's) greatest visions of "life itself", unified:

> Like quicksilver sliding, filings magnetized, the distracted united. The tune began; the first note meant a second; the second a third. Then down beneath a force was born in opposition; then another. On different levels they diverged. On different levels ourselves went forward; flower gathering some on the surface; others descending to wrestle with the meaning; but all comprehending; all enlisted. The whole population of the mind's immeasurable profundity came flocking; from the unprotected, the unskinned; and dawn rose; and azure; from chaos and cacophony measure; but not the melody of surface sound alone controlled it; but also the warring battle-plumed warriors straining asunder: To part? No. Compelled from the ends of the horizon; recalled from the edge of appalling crevasses; they crashed; solved; united. (BTA, 137)

Through the unification of music, Woolf emphasizes the potential harmony which is momentarily born out of life's battles and chaos. As Alice Van Buren Kelley comments, there is

> a moment when all efforts, factual and visionary, come together to create the infinite, indestructable pattern. The most fragmented, most threatened, most doubt torn members of the audience have, for an instant, seen the thread that unites all time, all people. And the reader too, as part of the audience, has experienced the revelation. (247-48)

The Reverend G. W. Streatfield then takes the stage and asks the audience what message the pageant has conveyed. He actualizes Woolf's message:

> 'To me at least it was indicated that we are members one of another. Each is part of the whole. Yes, that occurred to me, sitting among you in the audience ... We act different parts; but are the same ... as the play or pageant proceeded, my attention was distracted. Perhaps that too was part of the producer's intention? I thought I perceived that nature takes her part. Dare we, I asked myself, limit life to ourselves? May we not hold that there is a spirit that inspires, pervades ... I

> speak only as one of the audience, one of ourselves. I caught myself too reflected, as it happened in my own mirror ... Scraps, orts and fragments! Surely, we should unite?' (139-140)

The actors on the stage are embodiments of the audience and the world at large. The audience is humanity, in its most fallible, vulnerable form. The actors and actresses are the villagers, the people who work the land, who mind the shops, the village idiot and the village politician. They touch all aspects of human nature. The audience, too, is human nature at large, "ordinary people": the Olivers and their guests, the servants and the neighbours: the greatest diversity and yet the most profound unification. The play is simply about "ourselves", as we are part and parcel of the flux that surrounds us. Despite the segregation which prevails out of a celebration of rank and conventional expectations, we are joined, we "are all the same". Because of this eternal link, there must be compassion and a broad sympathy for the village idiot, patience with Mr. Ramsay, and forgiveness for Doris Kilman, for all of us wear a similar scar. North Pargiter is greatly mistaken when he concluded, "we cannot help each other ... we are all deformed" (TY, 409-410), for it is for this reason precisely that the vast gaps within human existence be bridged. The essence of androgyny lies in the ability to understand <u>both</u> entities.

With the exception of Lucy, most of the audience leaves the pageant unaffected by Miss La Trobe's efforts. They do attempt to maintain the peace expressed during

the acts: "Dispersed are we; who have come together ... let us retain whatever made that harmony ... O let us, the audience echoed ... keep together. For there is joy, sweet joy, in company" (BTA, 142-143). Finally, as cars are climbed into and goodbyes are said, the "gramophone gurgled Unity -- Dispersity. It gurgled Un .. dis ... And ceased" (BTA, 146).

Miss La Trobe leaves the grounds of the pageant, disturbed that her message was sent, but was unsustained. Much like Woolf herself, she allows the lack of perfection, the "failure" of not having had her purpose met, to consume her.

> It was in the giving that the triumph was. And the triumph faded. Her gift meant nothing. If they had understood her meaning; if they had known their parts ... it would have been a better gift ...
>
> 'A failure,' she groaned. (BTA, 151).

In despair, she begins working on her next play; her next attempt to illuminate, much like Woolf, begins immediately. "The curtain would rise. What would the first words be? The words escaped her" (BTA, 152). "She set down her glass. She heard the first words" (BTA, 154). The act of creation once again ensues; once again the wave breaks; once again, the life cycle and pattern resumes.

Mrs. Swithin feels the power and confirmation of her private vision through Miss La Trobe's art. She senses that Miss La Trobe is "a twitcher of individual strings"

(BTA, 112), and has revealed her private knowledge to the public. Sitting with her family, she concludes silently, "'The peasants; the kings; the fool and ... ourselves?'" (BTA, 154). The rest of the members of Pointz Hall, however, resort to their previous roles and previous entrapment. Mr. Oliver comments, rationally, that Miss La Trobe had been too ambitious. Isa repeats the passage, "Orts, scraps, fragments" (BTA, 156). She is still "caught and caged" between "love and hate -- how they tore her asunder" (BTA, 156). Isa resumes her daily chores, resting in the domestic, far removed from her more creative self. Giles changes into "the black coat and white tie of the professional classes ... 'Our representative, our spokesman,' she sneered ... Giles slit the flap of an apparently business document" (BTA, 156).

> The usual sounds reverberated through the shell; Sands making up the fire ... Isa had done with her bills ... she watched the pageant fade. The flowers flashed before they faded. She watched them flash. (BTA, 156)

The novel ends at night. "The darkness increased ... The great square of the open window showed only sky now. It was drained of light, severe, stone cold" (BTA, 158). A long span of darkness will cover the earth before the peace of dawn will spark once again. First, contention will reign; but in its wake rests the promise of serenity.

> The old people had gone to bed. Giles crumpled the newspaper and turned out the light. Left alone

> together for the first time that day, they were silent. Alone, enmity was bared; also love. Before they slept, they must fight; after they fought, they would embrace. From that embrace another life might be born. (BTA, 158)

Before there is repose, there must be war; after the war, a suspension of peace will prevail. From the suspension, another "daily miracle" will spark. Isa and Giles rest in the suspension between enmity and love, between the acts: "Then the curtain rose. They spoke" (BTA, 159).

Woolf's final novel does not end on a note of pessimism and discord, but rather, it ends with hope, and with a securing of the rhythm of "life itself". The vision of androgyny stands poised, despite, and in fact <u>because</u> of, the flux of the wave. "It was in the giving that the triumph was", and Virginia Woolf indeed has given, and has triumphed.

* * *

Virginia Woolf's life-long celebration of the ideal state of androgyny is an expression of her desire for solidarity and peace, within the world at large, within each and every sphere. For this inspiring vision, in both art and life, we owe her our gratitude -- and our respect.

APPENDIX

When critically examining the works of any author, it is important to remain as close to the text and to the artist's purpose as possible, paying heed to the author's doctrine rather than announcing one's own. It has been the purpose of this thesis to pay homage to Virginia Woolf by exploring the concept of androgyny, as it applies to the artist herself. Above all, Virginia Woolf was a believer in humanity, far more earnestly than she was a believer in feminism. She was a believer in hope rather than an advocate of grievances. Finally, she was a believer in solidarity rather than in exclusion. Therefore, it is through this light that Woolf's knowledge of androgyny, in order for it to be considered fairly and honestly, must be explored. Working from any other perspective or from any contemporary cause would be an injustice for it would fail to consider Woolf's personal vision first and foremost.

It has been my intention to present Woolf's theory in its most straight- forward form, devoid of politics and causes. Consequently, few of the most well known feminist critics have been mentioned. What follows is a brief presentation of their reasonings, as well as a re-emphasis of the necessity of reading and evaluating with care and accuracy. It is a privelege to have access to the author's works and personal documents; we must then treat it with the respect they deserve.

Elaine Showalter in her acclaimed work, A Literature of Their Own, commits one of the most severe injustices of all the feminist critics. Throughout her chapter, "Virginia Woolf and the Flight into Androgyny", Showalter insists on viewing Woolf through a 1970's feminist perspective, regardless of its complete lack of relevance to the standard Virginia Woolf advocated on the 1930's and 1940's. Woolf would never have claimed allegiance to any of the narrow causes that Showalter seems intrinsically linked to; Showalter misrepresents Woolf in the process of stating and restating her own anger. Such conclusions as "Androgyny was the myth that helped her evade confrontation with her own painful femaleness and enabled her to choke and repress her anger and ambition" (p. 264) , suggest a self-aware critic who cannot see beyond her own sexual insecurities. The theory of androgyny for Woolf became a harmonizing, illuminating knowledge, a knowledge through which all the life forces come into perfect, productive alignment. Out of this state is born artistic vision. Showalter lacks any vision at all beyond a radically feminist one, and more significantly, she refuses to present Woolf's theory as it is. With a strikingly one-sided stance, Showalter claims, "In Virginia Woolf's version of female aetheticism and androgyny, sexual identity is polarized and all the disturbing, dark, and powerful aspects of femaleness are projected onto maleness" (p. 264). It becomes clear that Elaine Showalter projects her own disturbing "female aesthetic" onto a comparatively well-adjusted, balanced literary genius.

Showalter's overall argument is based upon her belief that Woolf was anything but a representative of androgyny. But never once does Woolf claim to be androgynous; rather, she is a passionate advocate of an

awareness of solidarity, a productive state in which both forces are recognized, and thus cease to be oppositional. Showalter ignores this broader vision, and instead remains rooted to the traditional terms of male and female, claiming that "by the end of her life she had gone back full circle, back to the melancholy, guilt-ridden, suicidal woman..." (p. 266). Perhaps Showalter overlooked Woolf's final novel which solemnly acknowledges that, "Peace was the third emotion. Love. Hate. Peace. Three emotions made the ply of human life" (BTA, 70). Woolf dedicated her life to acknowledging the third reconciling emotion, the emotion of androgyny. Showalter does Woolf an immense discredit when she insists that only two polarized forces make the ply of life. Clearly, Showalter would have been the member of the audience who, like Mrs. Manressa, sees only her caged self rather than the potential for freedom and unity that surrounds her.

Showalter holds that Woolfs theory stands for an escape from both femininity and masculinity, rather than acknowledging it, as Woolf herself might have, as a bold celebration of both. Showalter not only errs, but apparently insults the credibility of the literary world when she claims that Woolf's breakdown, as well as her eventual "flight into androgyny" was rooted to three things: to the "shame and anxiety" associated with the onset of menstruation, to her "willful self-starvation" (which Showalter has also taken the liberty to diagnose for us as anorexia nervosa), and finally to the fact that she was sexually molested as a child by her two half-brothers. Showalter offers no definitive proof that these claims occasioned Virginia Woolf's flight into the freedom of androgyny.

It appears upon a closer examination that Elaine Showalter is a rather

angry, single-minded woman. Virginia Woolf was not, although Showalter will do her best to convince the public that she was. Showalter criticizes Woolf for "advocating a strategic retreat, and not a victory" (p. 285), but how can a clear and bold vision of unity and solidarity be anything but a victory for all those involved. Showalter continues to revel in her own anger and unresolved issues, and discredits anyone who manages to show respect for both sexes. "I think that the less comfortable states of mind that Woolf refers to are the angry and alienated ones, the femininst ones, and that she would like to possess a more serene and thus more comfortable consciousness" (p. 287). Showalter's writings suggest that a cause is only worthy if it is an angry and aggressive one; Virginia Woolf believed that composure and clarity go hand in hand, and, therefore, strove to transcend the anger associated with "the feminist ones". Woolf should undoubtedly be praised for her ability to accept both sexes, rather than criticized for her lack of fidelity to the woman's movement. Virginia Woolf, above all, disdained exclusion of any form; Showalter appears to advocate it. Recalling Pascal, Albert Camus writes in his Notebooks, "Error comes from exclusion" (p. 42).

Rachel Bowlby in her work, Feminist Destinations, finds Woolf's theory hypocritical primarily because of the statement "it is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex". Bowlby writes, "That creative writers, of all people, should be singled out as those for whom their sex should not figure seems to constitute a denial of the necessity of asserting women's differences, whether psychological or in terms of their access to

forms of literary expression" (p. 43). But Woolf eventually became secure enough, both as a writer as well as a woman, not to announce the differences of her sex, but rather to celebrate its ability to cooperate. It is toward this positive realm that Woolf decided to dedicate her energies. Woolf admirably concluded that it is destructive to live and create out of an awareness of one's sex, for only exclusion and one-sidedness develop out of such a bias: "It is fatal for a woman to lay the least stress on any grievance" (p. 45). And yet clearly, both Showalter and Bowlby are unable in their evaluation of Woolf's vision to consider her advice.

Interestingly enough, such women as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in their work, The Madwoman in the Attic, have chosen to focus only on the particularly "feminist", issue-oriented aspects of Woolf's writings. They pay no attention to such characters as Katharine Hilbery, who is both tea-server and mathematician, a woman of domesticity as well as a woman of London and the suffragette movement. Instead, they rather conveniently consider Virginia Woolf and Shakespeare's repressed sister as psychological twins. Once again, these observers become speakers for the feminist cause, rather than trained, objective literary critics. It seems a disgrace that while Woolf advocated open-mindedness, cooperation and a respect for both sides of life's duality, the majority of literary critics have failed to represent her ideals with accuracy or decency. With an apparent lack of conscience, Elaine Showalter claims that Woolf's famous definition of life, "a luminous halo, a semitransparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end", is in fact, "another metaphor of uterine withdrawal and containment" (p.

296). With a similar lack of respect and insight, Gilbert and Gubar will reduce Woolf's intricate portrait of Rachel Vinrace's death in The Voyage Out to the aftermath of "her sexual initiation by Terence" (p. 193). It seems apparent that each of these women has a sexual grievance which they insist upon voicing, despite its lack of significance to an insightful study of Woolf.

Finally, Patricia Waugh, in her study, Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmoderns, also chooses to view Woolf somewhat narrowly, but yet with a good deal more insight. Still, Waugh bears the feminist cross that her contemporaries carry, revealing the strikingly limited perspective that comes with such slanted reading. She states that Woolf "attempts to express in her writing...the dangers of an over-masculinized culture" (p. 91), and that she does so in a "classically 'feminine' relational manner" (p. 91). She also attempts at times to read Woolf in a traditional Freudian context. Let it suffice to say that there are only so many times that a discussion of Woolf in terms of the Oedipus Complex and sexual imagery is illuminating.

Clearly, there are various perspectives through which to consider the writings and beliefs of Virginia Woolf, and it becomes our duty to use the most critical judgement when deciding what the most earnest and appropriate perspective is. The following passage, taken from Ranier Maria Rilke's work, Letters to a Young Poet , strikes a chord which I feel certain respects to Virginia Woolf's vision of the ideal consummation between man and woman, masculinity and femininity:

> And even in the man there is motherhood, it seems to me, physical and spiritual; his procreating is also a kind of giving birth, and giving birth it is when he creates out of inmost fullness. And perhaps the sexes are more related than we think, and the great renewal of the world will perhaps consist in this, the man and maid, freed of all false feelings and reluctances, will seek each other not as opposites, but as brother and sister, as neighbors, and will come together as human beings, in order simply, seriously and patiently to bear in common the difficult sex that has been laid upon them. (p. 39)

It is my sincere hope that in the future critics will cease to view androgyny purely as a feminist concept, and, instead, will see it as the key to a unified, productive humanity.

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